

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

SELECT DOCUMENTS

187

From time to time their father, the chief, gives them a bull to kill. During the "coming out" food is very plentiful. If people pass on the road they honour them and give them food, and make love to them that they may build there. They remain in their shelters, they do not go about much. If the chief is stingy they teach him a lesson by taking bananas; they say: "Know that we are important people, we are those who have 'come out' and we are your parents." Later on they play drums—I think only in recent years. And the village headmen seize a woman, the daughter of a commoner, as a wife for the chief.

"The horn is the luck of the chiefs, that many people may come to build. Binding the horn to the blade of the spear is to show that the chief is one who has "come out" (*unsoka*); it is as if he were carried aloft (i.e. "chaired")¹. We show his greatness ("seniority") to people, then we trill.

"The fire made with fire sticks is to symbolize the new chieftainship. We do not take the old fire of the old men.

"The medicine is to make the chief heavy (*nsito*), that it may be apparent that he is a chief.

"The *ulupando* tree is a memorial of the "coming out", that men may come and say: "So and so planted this tree when he came out." Some say it is to show the power (*amaka*) of the chief, because if it does not grow it is said that his chieftainship will perhaps not flourish; then they will say: "Let us move and plant elsewhere." It is said that the spear of chieftainship is to fight battles; it is strength, manhood; it is treated with medicines.

"The tails are those with which battles are fought. When men go to war the senior headman grasps the tail. If the tail does not lead them well they return from the fight. It, also, they treat with medicines."

¹ A bride at a puberty-marriage ritual is carried about shoulder high.

FAREWELL TO THE DEAD

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QUESTION: The water dripping from the little hut?

MWASALEMBA: If we omit this then the children when young don't go mad, but they vomit a watery fluid, and people say that we have not performed the ritual of water for them.

QUESTION: The meaning of leaves and fruit of bananas?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, it is because those who run mad throw away their clothes and wear leaves. So in the ritual we make them wear leaves; we think that if we don't do this they will have the madness and throw away their clothes. The leaves of plantain belong to the man (the father), those of sweet banana to the woman (the mother). They signify the completion of the ritual, both of their father and of their mother. We make them wear both kinds of leaf, even if one parent is still alive, because they begot them together, their blood is one, the man's blood and the woman's blood. The plantain fruit which they insert in the leaves in front is the procreative power of the father, it is like his penis; the sweet banana which they insert behind is the fertility of the mother, it is like a bark-cloth. We throw them away in the water so that they may float away, it is a sign of death; the blood of our parents which was one is finished now!

QUESTION: The leaves on the neck?

MWASALEMBA: When they run mad people do this, they wear leaves on head and neck.

QUESTION: The stones on the head, in ears, mouth and fingers?

MWASALEMBA: That is a symbol of death. Does not the corpse resemble a stone? It neither speaks nor hears; it does not hoe, or work with its hands at all. He whom we have buried is like a stone. We throw his death away into the stream.

QUESTION: The little hut?

MWASALEMBA: That is for cooking food in; we don't cook for him [the dead man] in the house because we did not bury him there but outside, so we cook for him outside. . . . We grind millet in the doorway [778] because the doorway belongs to the shade. We say: 'Receive us, oh shade, since a person has died, receive us!' Because if we enter into the house we are with the shade, and when we come out we are with him, the doorway is the shade's (*ikifigo kya nsyuka*). It is like the pouring of water on the thatch; when we have come from bathing, we enter and come out again, the doorway is the shade's. And at other times, if someone is ill and the shade has been brooding over him, he stands in the doorway and prays to the shade (*ikumputa unsyuka*). Yes, when a man dies the shade broods over (*ikutobatela*) us living.

QUESTION: Does death come from the shades?

MWASALEMBA: Yes, when I have lain down at night, in the morning I tell my children: 'So-and-so and so-and-so came to me, I have eaten their food, they came to carry me off.' Then there is sickness and they say: 'The shades have brooded over you, you will die.' It is death in-

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796 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both
lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the
ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebra-
tion of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the
end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break
during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for
a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual
marks the beginning of their union.

796 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her
proper behaviour as a wife,¹ like a girl at her first marriage, under-
lines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense,
also marriage rituals.

592 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first,
775 those associated with the procreative activities of husband and
wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer
may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the
hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is
the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As
has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the
sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are planted at mar-
riage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union,
firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and
the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other
than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the mar-
riage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a
defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the
chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has
been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of
male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only
plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the
symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the root at
which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the
lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that
the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried
at the root of a banana plant. We were told: '*ilikemo*² *lyabatata*

¹ We did not see this at the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of
twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

² *Ilíkemo*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of
cattle in the sacred grove of a chief; *inyíkemo*: sacrificial meat; *yíkemo*: Holy Communion
(modern usage).

him, but if they find he has no cows with him they are angry, they do not receive him with rejoicing. If they do not kill some cattle at the burial of a dead man without doubt illness will come to the home. I they consult an oracle then the oracle says: 'Your fathers beneath are angry because you did not kill cattle for the burial of So-and-so.' So then they go and kill a beast. When they kill cattle at a death they do not kill for the mourners to eat, no, but they say it is that the fathers may receive him well, that they may not be angry. 775

The shades manifest themselves to the living in dreams or as snakes, and they come by night to the homestead to eat food set aside for them in the sacred grove or the senior wife's hut.

Whenever food is cooked a little is left for the shades. It is said that the shades come by night to eat the food. Some people say that they have seen the shades when they come to warm themselves by the fire in the house. If the fire of the shades blazes up, and I look, it is extinguished immediately, and if someone turns round the hut is quite dark. People eat the food which they put for the shades, they do not throw it away. Sometimes, if the food rots, they say it is because the shades have eaten from it. People say that if they do not put aside food the shades will take away the fertility of the fields and we will not have much food.

The hearth is a shrine: the food and beer are left overnight beside the hearth or on the hearth-bricks. Every good housewife has a log of firewood which she keeps by her all her life: she takes it with her when she moves and it is burnt at her funeral. 'It is the shades'. The shades [of her husband] pick bits from it when they want to warm themselves at the fire.' And the wife herself must keep out of the way: 'Some men refuse to let their wives sleep near the fire at night, saying: "You will drive away the shades."' 775 778●

The association of a small grove of bananas in each homestead with the shades has already been stressed. There meat and beer offered in sacrifice are left. There is also a connection, most obvious among chiefs, but occurring among commoners also, between the shade and a chosen tree. In Ngonde Mwenefumbo said:

The fathers prayed at the grave of their father. If a man moved he took *ilindu*, a branch of the tree at the grave, and carried it to his new home and there put it in a tree he had chosen, saying: 'Now you have arrived, Father.' He poured out beer and flour there and invoked all his fathers and grandfathers and ancestors, saying: 'May I sleep! Gather and eat these things! May the children sleep.' Then he blew out water and finished. 775 778 166

196 The Ancestral Spirits

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782 Of the persons officially connected with the spirits, the most important is the chief. It has already been said that "Chungu is the man who speaks with God"; he is also the man who speaks with authority to the spirits. He, and all other chiefs, approach the spirits for the general good, but as heads of families they have the right to offer private prayers as well. Each head of a family may also pray for his own people; but no man may pray so long as his father or elder brother is alive. Next, every chief has an official who may be called a priest; he is the *unnyago*, the man whose duty it is to go daily at the order of the chief to present an offering at the grave where the last chief is buried. He does not pray; he simply lays the offering, usually a few maize cobs, on the grave and departs. When the chief goes in person to pray, as he sometimes does, without any public ceremony, this man goes with him, hears the prayers, and knows the ritual; and it is he who will teach the new chief his duties when the time comes for him to perform them. When, however, the chief dies, the *unnyago* is in great danger, for the spirits take possession of his person, a danger which can only be averted by a powerful medicine supplied by the doctor, and taken as soon as the chief has died. If this is not done, he becomes mad, lives in the bush, gibbering and naming all the dead chiefs of the past, including names known to no living person, but supposed to be those of long-dead chiefs, uttered by themselves through him.

● 778 With regard to places of worship: the "high place" is always at the grave of the dead chief.

The Ancestral Spirits

197

it is there that prayer for the community at large is offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *ikiyinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt. 778●

Here and there are to be found traces of non-human spirits. They are not called *basyuka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with 776

206 The Worship of the Spirits

782 A person involved in a lawsuit was similarly prayed for:

"Be merciful, and let his case be good. May he escape and return to us; for those men are gods; whom they imprison they imprison, and whom they kill they kill."

The men referred to are the European Administrative Officers, before whom cases are heard. If the case is tried by a native chief, the clause is omitted. A man who has been away at work, in the employment of a white man, gives, on his return in safety, a piece of cloth to the family representative, who, after it has been laid up in the house for a time, asks the permission of the spirits to wear it, for it is theirs; and, taking their permission for granted, leaves a tiny rag to represent it. Less careful persons wear it at once, the rag being enough to keep the spirits in good temper. The numerous other occasions on which worship is offered are described in the appropriate chapters.

Greatest of all Konde ceremonies is the prayer for rain. And around this ceremony much erroneous information has collected; for the so-called "rain-maker" does not make the rain; his duties are quite different. The rain is the gift of God; it is His to give or withhold as He sees fit. All that living men can do is to pray to the spirits, who, in turn, present the petition to God; and God, if there is no obstacle among men themselves, will grant the petition.

Of sacred objects connected with rain ceremonies, the most important is the *mulima* (an old word meaning *the world*), which is never seen by anyone except

The Worship of the Spirits 207

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was originally in the possession of Chungu, but some generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

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to

PEOPLES OF THE LAKE NYASA REGION

MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGION

769 The ancestor cult was the main feature of Ngonde religion. As long as a man had alive a father, father's full brother, or a senior brother, this senior kinsman dealt with the ancestral spirits, not only on his behalf, but also on behalf of his wives and children. In the absence of sickness or misfortune no appeal was made to the spirits. If the diviner diagnosed anger of the ancestors as cause, the senior kinsman had to pray for the sick one. If the half-brothers lived at a distance from each other after the death of their father and uncles, each might pray to the spirits to cure a little sickness, but if it persisted a message had to be sent to the senior kinsman. Wrongs which aroused the anger of the spirits were usually breaches of family morality, insult to a father, neglect of responsibilities by an heir. Offerings consisted of a bull, hen, or beer in the case of commoners, a cow in the case of a chief. The worship of dead chiefs as such was not connected with everyday morality. On the offering of cows by chiefs to their immediate ancestors depended the food and health of the chiefdom and the fertility of women and cows.¹

769 643 Each Kyungu was buried in the valley around Mbande, and the grave was planted with trees, making a sacred grove. In times of drought and widespread sickness, sacrifices were made at the groves under the guidance of a diviner.² An insult to the living Kyungu was believed to cause a drought. Each chief or noble was believed to be able to avert local misfortunes for his own people, and the head of every family participated in the divinity of his own ancestors. The great commoners of each chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits, and so to have a hold upon him. The nobles of Ngonde had a similar power over the Kyungu.

643 As the Kyungu's health was bound up with the welfare of the community, elaborate precautions to maintain his health and to protect him from the danger of sexual impurity were taken, and when he ailed he was killed by suffocation.³

● 776 Sacred lagoons by the lake were associated not with the ancestors, but with a vague supreme deity, *Mbumba*.⁴

796 There were two important annual rituals for the whole tribe in addition to the special sacrifices to avert misfortune. One was the clearing out of the ashes each year after the break of the rains, which was performed on the order of the Kyungu, given through the nobles of Ngonde. The second was the elaborate first-fruits ceremony: fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde, in the grove of the last dead Kyungu, and then by the great chiefs, each in the grove of his own predecessor. The nobles and the chiefs of the hills had similar rituals, but they were not synchronized with those of the plain.⁵

WITCHCRAFT

754 626 The Ngonde believe that certain men and women have the power of harming their neighbours and neighbours' cattle without taking any overt action. The witchcraft is hereditary, and of particular virulence if inherited through the mother.⁶ Witches exert their influence at night in dreams. There are two kinds of witches, *omamanga*, defender

¹ Wilson, 2, 1936, pp. 256-7; 3, 1936, p. 84; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 191 and 196, also Ch. VII.

² Wilson, 3, 1936, pp. 29-30.

³ Ibid., p. 34; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 178-97.

⁴ Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 250-69.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 34-6.

⁶ Wilson, 3, 1936, pp. 29-34.

643 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave
769 to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.
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(a) *THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.*

643 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande
764 none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to
778 dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the
valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and
grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove
has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to,
not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus
Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu
Mwakasungula as "He of Iputa," and so on.

643 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be
731 caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one.
787 "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner
782 to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell
them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu.
And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some
beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one
of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.¹
And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they
would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told
them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted
(for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his
house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.²
Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a
tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they
would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the
grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'.
And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour.
Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in
the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
731 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who
787 was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of
the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

¹ Vide *infra* section 4.² This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

643 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in
 769 the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the
 778 country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were
 believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we
 have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were
 believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned.
 776 It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ikikungu*) each year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

[787] "Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and

000 structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. 796 Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;¹ while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed 622 to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by 565 offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs like- 769 wise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While 731 among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned² would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

• 778 And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, 776 Kambwa, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not 782 with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

771 Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to 643 notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in 565 the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. 622 The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

¹ Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

² Mwan-kisindile, Mwan-kaluma, Mwan-ifumbo etc.

chief from the wanfon attacks of witches; but if ever there is a just ⁶²²
ground of offence they are believed to join their own power of witchcraft ⁷⁵⁴
in the general attack. I know one chief who dare not give a judgement
in a dispute between two of his villages for fear of the indignant witch-
craft of the losing side. And a general unpopularity is believed always to
lead, sooner or later to a chief's death.

Chiefs also, like other men, fear the use of sorcery (i.e. destructive
magic) against them, and use a number of protective "medicines" (i.e.
materials of magic) to protect themselves from it. They also use power-
ful "medicines" to give themselves personal impressiveness, prestige
and authority among their people.

While in the families of commoners an ancestral spirit is only believed ⁷⁷¹
to affect the lives of his own descendants, the ancestors of a chief, on the ⁶²²
other hand, are supposed to influence, for good or ill, the fortunes of
whole chiefdoms. Rain and good crops, the fertility of women and
cattle are dependent upon their good will, which in its turn is believed to
depend upon a recurrent sacrifice of cows. And for this sacrifice the
chiefs, their living descendants, are responsible.²² But, owing to the
continuous division of chiefdoms every generation, several chiefs are
concerned in each sacrifice; every dead chief is a source of misfortune or
of blessing in the countries of all his direct descendants. And so the
discussion of this part of the Nyakyusa religion leads us to the investiga-
tion of the groups which extend beyond the boundaries of a single chief-
chiefdom.

(c) *Groups wider than the Chiefdom*

When a chief dies he is buried near the house of his senior great wife ⁷⁷⁸ ●
and trees are planted on his grave. The trees grow and form a sacred ⁷⁹³
grove (*aliyeto*) hedged by taboos. Each of these groves is at first the ⁷⁶⁴
religious centre of two, later of a number of chiefdoms, and in them the
sacrifices are made. Responsibility for finding the cow for sacrifice in a
particular grove rests with one of the living chiefs concerned, but respon-
sibility for initiating the ritual and performing it lies not only with the
chiefs but also with the hereditary priests (*amuryo*) in each chiefdom. [⁴²]
These hereditary priests are descended, some from the great commoners
of the dead chief who is buried in that particular grove, some from his
half-brothers. The ritual is esoteric, there is no gathering of the people
at the sacrifice, and only chiefs and those with hereditary priesthoods

²² I am speaking here of the religious customs of the Nyakyusa proper and the
Selya people, I believe those of the Kukwa and Mwanika are very similar,
but I have not studied them in detail.

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
● 778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated
by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told
me that "now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes."
But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by
prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In
each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and
some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming
of misfortune (*ohokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said
always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon
them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya
is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya,
many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chief-
doms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices.
Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original
chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight
or nine generations ago; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are
descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a
brother of Lwembe; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not
related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send
cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this
grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisiya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has
not been carried out for forty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga
was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir
James Frazer's "Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which
not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility
also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his
own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been
properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at
Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next
[73] tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone
Mountains; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down
the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

289

And every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants. 622
782
[574]

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and believe still are²¹ made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe. 778 ●
1764

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper. 795

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper. 636

Conclusion : Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all. 121
128

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships. 121

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

²¹ I have not yet been there to investigate.

10 COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

539 Mwakaleli and came here and died. The Kinga went to BuSangu to buy food, for there was great hunger after Mbasi and Kyala were driven out, and wandering home they came here and met Mbasi. He said, 'Go home, there will be plenty of food, but I want my things.' He had left them at his father's place when he fled with his sister Kyungu. He asked for his leopard and otterskins, his drums, his bows for shooting birds,¹ his harp, mats, a stool, bamboo beer, and twenty hoes. . . . Then the Kinga went back and found their country full of food; and they brought all his things to Mbasi and even things like salt that he had not asked for. . . . This is how the ritual began. . . . Mbasi ruled because he had helped them in their hunger.

173 Kasitile (86), the rain-maker, speaking of the same incident,
773 stressed only the hoes. Lwembe 'came to Lubaga and found a good place to settle, then he sent out messengers to Mwemusi (the Kinga chief) and said: "I want my hoes, especially my great, eyed hoe" (*ilikumbulu ilya maso*). (The old ritual hoes had perforations—'eyes'—on the blades comparable to the perforations on other rain-making instruments.) Still today Kinga priests [778] come to Lubaga to sacrifice to Lwembe (3), and they bring with them hoes.² [782]

[643] The hero of Ngonde, the Kyungu (16), was also associated with iron implements which he had brought with him—a spear, staff, stool, and a sieve used for making rain, which were royal insignia, and razors, spears, and knives of an unusual pattern, which long remained in the groves of the hero and his successors.

[372] In the commonly-told Nyakyusa myth it was Lwembe who introduced fire to BuNyakyusa—'he found the original occupants eating their food raw'—and the fact that he conferred so great a benefit is the charter for the position of the chiefs, celebrated at every 'coming out'. The Kinga priests push the spread of fire back a little further.

539 Of old in this country [BuKinga] there was no fire, men ate food un-
372 cooked; there were very few men in the country, most of it was forest. This was after Mwemusi came to Kinga country. Then one man, a hunter, went into the forest to hunt buck and otter, and he had dogs. And in the forest he made fire with a drill and cooked his food; and gave his friends cooked food to eat, and they were astonished.

¹ The bow and arrow are not now used among the Nyakyusa, but men in their thirties had used them when boys, for shooting birds.

² cf. Ludwig Weichert, *Meyilaga i Afrika! Kehu wieder Afrika* (Berlin, 1927), p. 129, for a photograph of one.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CHARTER

13

and Tutsi who established conquest states to the north-west.¹

Whatever the origin and adventures of the heroes they were important in Nyakyusa and Ngonde history because their graves became centres of religious ritual which linked together groups that were otherwise largely independent. The myths about them are the charter for chieftainship. They are depicted as benefactors who brought to uncivilized men not only the institution of chieftainship itself, but fire, cattle, iron, seed, and a creative power resident in their own bodies and those of their anointed heirs. But the myths also justify the power of commoners who first occupied the country and who have witchcraft in their bellies:

The commoners whom Lwembe found here were extraordinary. They were cultivators, but they had not yet got fire, they ate their food raw. It was we chiefs, it was Lwembe, who brought fire and cattle—he came and found the original occupants without cattle; hence the commoners say, 'We are the earth'. Commoners are different from us physically, they are black; they are awe-inspiring, they are witches. Before you Europeans came the chiefs like Mwaipopo (116) were not awe-inspiring, they feared the commoners very much; the commoners hammered the chief with their fists—yes, by daylight. And if the chief cut a man's bananas that man took the chief's. If the commoners were angry with Mwaipopo they fetched Mwangomo (124 whose chiefdom adjoins Mwaipopo's) at night by their witchcraft; he came in the night with his people and seized the cattle, both those of the chief, Mwaipopo, and those of the commoners. The next day the commoners said: 'It is we, we are angry. Why do you not look after us? Why do you not kill cattle for us?' Then Mwaipopo would kill two head of cattle and all the men in the country ate. . . . Mwaipopo and his equals were not awe-inspiring long ago, it is you Europeans who have created chieftainship and awe.

¹ cf. H. H. Curson and R. W. Thornton, 'A Contribution to the Study of African Native Cattle', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, vii, 2 October 1936 (Government Printer, Pretoria). An analysis of the distribution and migration of breeds in Africa. [113]

H. B. Thompson and R. Scott, *Uganda* (1935), pp. 195 ff.

Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 68: 69.

M. Merker, *Die Massai*, pp. 157 ff., 1904, Berlin.

H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1904, pp. 86, 103 (early photographs of Nyoro cattle).

The short-horn type predominates among the Nyakyusa, but some animals suggest an intermixture with Sanga cattle. The hump is regarded as a great delicacy and is exaggerated in the clay cattle which boys model. Cf. Fülleborn, *op. cit.*, pl. 72. The similarity between the ritual and symbolism of the Nyakyusa and those of the Ganda as described by Roscoe is marked. J. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 1911. [231]
[825]
[532]

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

21

access. It was the nobles who were the effective rulers of the country; the divine Kyungu was the centre, a source of mystical power, a numinous symbol of unity, but not a judge or an administrator. Gradually, however, the Kyungus emerged from seclusion; they descended from the hill of Mbande; later they ceased to live within a stockade; in the crises of the Ngoni invasion the Kyungu in office (a notable warrior before his accession to the stool) broke tradition by himself taking arms. 'When the Ngoni came their enmity was like that of the lions and their number like that of the ants, and so Kyungu Mwakasungula, seeing his people were terrified, took up arms in person, and said he would die fighting. And his people heard with awe and astonishment that he himself had come to fight and they determined to die with him.' The next stage was a development of the judicial functions of the Kyungu until, in the present generation, the transformation from god to magistrate was complete.¹

We turn now to the detailed description of the rituals at each shrine.

(b) LUBAGA

Lubaga is a hill dominating the central part of the Nyakyusa valley and on its slopes are signs of old and intensive cultivation. There an early Lwembe (19) lived and was buried, there is the grove where he is worshipped, and there his descendant chosen as 'the living Lwembe' should build. According to tradition the 'sons of Lwembe' spread all over the Nyakyusa valley as chiefs, but two senior lineages, that of Mwampondele (27) and that of Mwakis-
[173]
isya (56), remained near Lubaga, and from them was chosen, alternately, the living embodiment of the 'divine king', the Lwembe. Men feared greatly to be chosen, for they feared to be
[173]
'killed by the grove', and indeed the Lwembe rarely lived long. He must not fall ill or all the people of the country would do so likewise; therefore if he ailed he was smothered by his priests who stuffed up his nostrils and other passages of his body. Towards the end of our stay in BuNyakyusa Kasitile made a formal statement on this point in the presence of another priest, Mwamakunda:

The Lwembes were not sick. They said: 'I am going, I have eaten food at home, at the place of the shade', and they died that day; they

¹ The change in the position of the Kyungu from the earliest period is discussed in detail by Godfrey Wilson in *The Constitution of Ngonde*.

769 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening,
 643 while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his
 nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted:
 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they
 smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went
 away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it
 himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they
 [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little
 bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not
 go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the
 soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

- [778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically
 connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

643 While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did
 [784] not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example,
 he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded;
 he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was
 carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a
 green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail,
 but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only
 the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he
 finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the
 country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same
 calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a
 calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it
 behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary
 priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come
 from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be
 of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only
 willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief,
 they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own
 home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but
 [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own
 homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there
 will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease
 and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice,
 they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of
 leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he
 [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

782 dare not greet their children on their return without the safeguard
 789 of protective medicines. At a celebration the Kinga priests took
 751 medicines, 'powdered medicine which comes from Mwemusi
 and Mwakalukwa [the Kinga chiefs]', and smeared it on
 Lwembe's forehead and shoulders 'because the grove is great. If
 you entered it without this medicine you died'; they gave the
 Lwembe the medicine 'so that Kyala (*vide* pp. 17-18) might not
 kill him, that he might show respect and escape'.

783 Another medicine, *imbinga*, which is red in colour, was brought
 789 from BuKinga to smear on the foreheads of the children of the
 Lwembe and Kissoule, the priest, when these two returned home
 after celebrating in the grove. Their senior wives 'would smear
 the *imbinga* on the children's foreheads, when they would turn
 round calling: "You hit us", and Mwakisiya (56) (the Lwembe)
 and Kissoule (the priest) would both reply: "No, I am innocent
 (*mwelu*).'" The medicine was smeared on the children because
 Mwakisiya and his fellow thought: "How can we meet them,
 how can they look on our bodies, since we are taboo from the
 ritual." Yes, the words are the same as in the twin ritual, but the
 medicine is different.' During one of the rituals we attended,
 Mwakilima (111) begged the Kinga priests to bring him some of
 this medicine for the protection of his children.

788 The numinous quality of everything connected with Lubaga
 769 can hardly be exaggerated; the Nyakyusa believe that it over-
 comes even curious Europeans. The most sacred and terrible
 object of all was the drum which was polished with blood, the
 blood of children, who, in Nyakyusa thought, had died for the
 people, that the country might live and be fertile. 'Formerly,
 [782] when the Kinga came with a drum, they said: "Catch the child
 of a commoner, fat and strong, hide him in the drum." In the old
 days when the Kinga came beating their drum, ping . . . ping
 . . . [single strokes with long intervals] we of the country used to
 run away and women would hide their children for fear lest they
 be snatched up and put in the drum.'¹ The child was strangled

[534] ¹ These statements were made by three different groups of informants independ-
 ently. All had special knowledge of these matters. The *ilikole*, the sacred drum of the
 Kinga, differs in shape from the Nyakyusa *indingala*. It is made of *nkuju* wood and
 ox-hide and is beaten when a ritual is celebrated and to summon men to war. The
 Kinga do not dance to drums and the Nyakyusa did not do so formerly either, but
 after the Europeans arrived Nyakyusa chiefs began to buy *indingala* from outside
 BuNyakyusa, paying a bull for a set—"a mother drum and her children". Only quite
 recently have Nyakyusa craftsmen learnt from a Henga immigrant to make *indingala*.

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

27

and its body taken to Lubaga and added to the 'medicine for fertility' (*inkata gwa ifuge*) which was sprinkled throughout the country, starting at Lubaga, proceeding to the other sacred groves, and then to the ordinary homesteads. Thus the terror of the grove had objective roots in the fact of human sacrifice, but it is rather a fear of the unknown and miraculous than of death itself; a fight involving casualties was not terrible in the same way as the grove and the throb of the sacred drum.

The Kinga priests travelled 'the road of Lwembe', down the escarpment of the Livingstone mountains from Mwakalukwa's country and across Selya, beating their drum. They stopped to sleep at the home of Kasitile the priest, and poured a libation of beer at 'the places where Lwembe had rested': Isumba, a hill overlooking Kasitile's homestead, Kituli in Mwaipopo's country, and near the homestead of the priest Munyoso.¹ 'He [Lwembe] used to shout on Isumba, the little hill here, then no one would cut the trees on the hill,' said Kasitile. 'It was one of his resting places; he used to come here to tell my grandfather to go and get a cow for Lubaga, and later to tell my father to do so. . . . The beer is poured at the base of an *akaju* tree (a variety of *ficus*) at Isumba, in the long grass in Kituli, and at the base of an *akaju* near Munyoso's homestead. "They pour [it] out here by the *akaju*, they beat the drum to say: "We have come", then the people of Munyoso hide their children—that's of old.' Besides the drum the Kinga travelled with a kudu horn² (blown in battle in BuKinga) and a sacred drum and horn were lodged in the hut of the Lwembe's chief wife. Before they start the Kinga priests make an offering of millet flour and beer in one of their own groves,³ and leave there overnight the beer and salt and hoes which they will take to the Lwembe, 'that the aba-Ngulube (g) may see them before they go to Lwembe'.

At Lubaga there were several places of prayer and offering: the trees planted at the installation of the last living Lwembe (*vide infra* pp. 54-5), the trees planted at the installation of a previous

¹ Probably grandson of 84 and representative of a junior lineage to which priestly functions had been delegated.

² *Ushilile* in Kinga, *ingongo* *bawir* in Nyakyusa. cf. plate 54.

³ Nyandala, a Kinga chief, and two priests took Godfrey Wilson to a sacrifice in one of their groves. The form of sacrifice is very similar to that among the Nyakyusa save that the meat-offering is placed in the fork of a tree. The priests had gone very early in the morning 'to tell Bulalile (the dead chief) "Do not be angry, a European comes to greet you"':

778 Lwembe, and the grove of the first Lwembe himself, the last being
 782 the most sacred. In it stands a miraculous tree from which, the
 priests aver, sometimes comes sap like water, and sometimes blood.
 [753] 'If it is watery there will be a plague of ulcers in the country—
 [755] running sores—if it is blood there will be dysentery. But as soon
 as the hoes are placed in the grove, or the black bull is killed,
 then the sick begin to recover.'

788 Godfrey Wilson attended three celebrations at Lubaga, and we
 heard of five others which occurred during our period of field-
 work. The ritual is esoteric, that is to say, only the representative
 of Lwembe and his priests participate, and the details are not
 revealed to others, but its occurrence is widely known and dis-
 cussed among older men.

[643] The celebrations observed were modified by the fact that no one
 [793] had been installed as Lwembe since the death of Mwakisisiya
 [177] (56) before 1914. The possible candidates whom the priests had
 wished to instal had refused—'they feared the grove'; the only
 one who was said to be willing was rejected on account of his
 character. The priests gave 'European times' as the reason for
 there being no Lwembe. 'When the country was ours before you
 Europeans came' the elected candidate was compelled to accept
 office. On the death of Mwakisisiya, the Kinga priests ordered that
 his senior son Mwanjala I (77) should take his place, and when
 Mwanjala I died (three years after his father) his full brother
 Mwanjala II (78) succeeded. He took a leading part in the rituals
 observed, but was not an anointed Lwembe. The priests ex-
 plained: 'We fear, thinking that if a chief is seized [and compelled
 to sit on the stool] he will complain to the Government and we
 shall be punished.' During the period of German rule they had
 been threatened with imprisonment if they continued the ritual . . .
 'we feared and stole through the country by night'. . . . And there
 is still much secrecy about its truncated celebration. Since the
 journey down 'the road of Lwembe' with the drum traditionally
 involved human sacrifice, and the Lwembe was smothered when
 ailing, there is an absolute incompatibility between a full cele-
 bration of the ritual and European administration.

177 The influence of the Christian minority is also considerable. The
 788 view of most Nyakyusa Christians with whom we discussed
 communal rituals is that they used to be efficient, but are so no
 longer, since men have been taught a better way of approaching
 God. 'God said: "They are mistaken but in their hearts they are

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

31

the house of Mwamalunguka, a hereditary priest of Lubaga (whose ancestor came with the first Lwembe (*vide* p. 8). There were present five chiefs of Mwakisisa's (56) line, including Mwanjala II (78), who represents the Lwembe, but is ailing and has never been installed; two Kinga priests and a Kinga messenger sent to escort them; four priests of Lubaga (including Mwamalunguka himself), Kasitile the priest of Selya, and Godfrey Wilson. 782

Mwanjala brought a small black bull worth 12s., bought with the money and a hoe provided by the Kinga, and sent for a stem of bananas and a flask of fresh milk. A rowdy discussion began about the procedure: 'In the old days we used to pour whey over our hands to wash them, and to wash our mouths, and in the sacred grove we would pour it away. . . .' Then the party went to a small grove surrounded by cultivated land, and Nsyanigwa, the Kinga priest, stopped at the stump of a tree, still alive, on the edge of the grove, saying: 'This is the *umpandapanda* tree [a *figus* planted at the coming out of a chief] where we used to pour the beer,' but Mwanjala denied it saying 'No, they have hoed over it, the tree was here in the bean patch.' After some dispute they agreed to go right into the grove to sacrifice. The grove is on the site at which the trees were planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisa (56) the last Lwembe, and the house of his senior wife, Njala, was built. She is buried there, where her swept courtyard used to be, and during Mwakisisa's lifetime the beer used to be poured out beside this sacred tree. The last sacrifice here was when Kissoule was a boy (1885-90), hence the uncertainty as to the place, but just why the beer sacrifices had all been at the homestead of Kitega (*vide supra*) was not clear. 782 796 [773]

Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) asked Mwamalunguka (the priest of Lubaga) to bring over the three calabashes, one of millet beer, one of milk and one of bamboo beer, but Mwamalunguka refused and Nsyanigwa had to fetch them himself. It was the Kinga who had insisted on the Nyakyusa providing millet beer saying: 'If we first pour out our bamboo beer we will go off with all the fertility of the country, let them begin with theirs.' Mwanjala, summoned by Nsyanigwa, came and stood at the foot of the tree while Nsyanigwa poured millet beer first into his hands and then at the foot of the tree, and the priests prayed, Mwanjala and Nsyanigwa in Nyakyusa, Kikungubeja in Kinga: [842]

Oh thou Mwambipili, thou Kissoule, thou Mwamalunguka,¹ thou

¹ Three hereditary priests of Lubaga.

782 Lwembe, this is your millet beer, we complain of hunger, oh thou
796 Mwampondele (27), thou Lwembe.

Then the milk was poured likewise and again they prayed for milk and calves, for children and health:

Here is your milk . . . may the locusts pass, may sickness be slight, may milk be plentiful, may the cows calve!

Finally the bamboo beer was poured out, too, and both the Kinga priests prayed in Kinga speaking of hunger. Mwanjala, instructed by Nsyangwa, took some bamboo beer into his mouth and blew it three times in different directions, saying, between blowing: 'May the rain come.'

The bull was killed by Mwanjande (?). Nsyangwa first gave the axe and knife to Mwanjala saying: 'This axe and knife [an unhasted and very old spearhead] I, Nsyangwa, brought from BuKinga to kill the bull, go and kill it.' Mwanjala asked: 'Shall I not give the axe to my younger brother?' and Nsyangwa replied: 'Yes, give it to him.' So Mwanjala gave it to Mwanjande who killed the bull with one blow at the back of the head. Mwansasu (a commoner priest) cut up the carcass, collecting the first stream of blood in a pot. Then the sacred meat was taken from the fore-legs, that from the right leg being placed on a plantain leaf, that from the left on a leaf of sweet banana. It was cut up and carried by Kitega (heir of 57?), who walked behind Mwanjala and the two Kinga priests, to the tree where they had poured the beer and milk. Mwanjala turned to the group of those sitting talking and shouting and said: 'Friends, a spear will go to the shades [i.e. the shades will be offended by your noise], be quiet', and they fell silent until the offering of meat was made. Then Mwanjala scraped a hollow in the cleared earth at the root of the tree with his foot and threw into it seven or eight pieces. He and the Kinga prayed, while Kitega stood silently holding the rest of the meat:

Oh thou Lwembe, thou Mwampondele (27), stand by us, this is your bull. . . . Give us children, milk, cattle, food; may sickness be slight . . . stand by us.

All this meat was taken from the plantain leaf—the men's portion. At the end, as they walked away Kitega asked: 'What about the women's meat?' And Mwanjala repeated his question. The Kinga replied: 'Are there two sacred places? No! There is no sacrifice

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

793
643
291
142
[415]



5a. PRIESTS OF LUBAGA (KINGA)

[534]
[778]



5b. KINGA PRIESTS WITH HORN AND DRUM

[Facing p. 39]

643 dic. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines
753 for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food,
[781] ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) MBANDE

778 Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many
643 generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,¹ one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwa mahala*) and generous in feeding his people.

[794] The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous
[753] than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*ntemi*)', it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

751 Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived
643 in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was
[841] prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating
[644] woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it
[753] and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

¹ *Unyambala uncamu*. It implies both big physically and important.

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

41

immured in the royal enclosure—a great stockade—and jealously guarded, for any infidelity on their part was thought to make their husband ill, and with him the whole country. [643] [644] [753]

When the Kyungu did fall ill he was smothered by the nobles who lived around him at Mbande, and buried in great secrecy, with a score or more of living persons—slaves—in the grave beneath him, and one or two wives and the sons of commoners above. And in the midst of all this slaughter the nobles brought a sheep to look into the grave that the dead Kyungu might be gentle (*mololo*) like the sheep! [643] [766] [825]

The living Kyungu was thought to create food and rain, and his breath and the growing parts of his body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried 'with the breath in his body'; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This was 'to defend the country against hunger', 'to close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile as it was when he himself lived in it'. [778] [789]

His death was kept secret—a relatively easy matter since he lived in seclusion—and one of the nobles (*Ngosi*) impersonated him wearing his clothes. After a month or two when the nobles had decided whom to choose as the new Kyungu, the luckless man was summoned to Mbande: 'Your father calls you.' 'Then he came with his companions and entered the house to make obeisance; they seized him and put the sacred cloth on him and set him on the stool "Kisumbi", saying, "Thou Kyungu, thou art he", and he became the Kyungu. Then they struck the drum, Mwengelwa, and everyone knew that the Kyungu had died and another had been installed.' Men feared greatly to be seized as the Kyungu, just as they feared to be seized as the Lwembe, because the life of a divine king was short. Ngonde historians quote a number of cases of sons of the Kyungu who fled to escape being set on the stool; once they had sat on it they dared not flee lest they die. [643] [768]

Though¹ the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for 'the ground was [778] [766]

¹ The following section is quoted, with additions and amendments, from Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, pp. 29 ff.

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
 778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
 [766] trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves
 round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is
 buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by
 that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in
 the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them
 out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that
 of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
 [769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the
 anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and
 dead were placated with offerings.

778 In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
 787 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
 782 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would
 821 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
 643 Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with
 some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them
 some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into
 the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the
 beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they
 would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the
 cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—
 an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally,
 they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly
 always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make
 an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had
 mentioned.

643 But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
 688 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
 787 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the
 689 names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
 821 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
 was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all,
 but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted
 the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant
 by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
 643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
 821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

44

COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

769 pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit cere-
 796 mony was formerly carried out. The new season's food was
 offered first by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous
 Kyungu, the one who had last died.

● [778] The great chiefs would do so next, each at his own sacred grove (the
 grave of his own predecessor in the title). And after them everyone,
 both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first
 fruits to their own shades. And finally they would themselves eat, each
 with his chief wife. But they would not eat beforehand for fear of
 angering the shades.

643 In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde
 796 led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned
 [721] from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to
 receive their instructions:

[782] When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go and pray.
 So they would leave his house and gather all together, all the chiefs,
 and the other men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would
 begin asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless
 them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after him.

This organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was
 both a factor of and itself determined by the general political
 structure. Many details of the secular power of Mbande and of
 the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious func-
 tions, but the reverse is equally true. Among the Nyakyusa,
 where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular significance,
 [782] the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle
 were sent to Lubaga by the chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and
 health; but the 'clearing out of the ashes' was done by each
 chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruits ritual at all;
 while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and
 sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each
 warring chiefdom alone.

643 The majesty (*ubusiga*) of the Kyungu was cultivated in a variety
 789 of ways. He smeared himself with ointment made from lion fat,
 and his bed was built up with elephant tusks and lion pelts. He
 [352] was enthroned on the sacred iron stool called Kisumbi, he had a
 [293] spear, Kamisa, and Mulima, a porous piece of iron 'like a mouth
 organ' used to make rain, all handed down from the first Kyungu.
 [778] His zebra tails, set with medicines in horn handles, were waved in

THE 'DIVINE KINGS'

45

war and during prayer to the shades, and he also had the famous drum on which the blood of a child was poured:

The Kyungu had a drum, called Mwenekelwa, which sometimes refused to sound when struck, then they asked: 'What does it wish, friends?' and they killed a sheep and poured the blood over Mwenekelwa; if it refused to sound when they struck it again, they killed a cow and poured the blood over it and if it still refused to sound when they struck it again, they said: 'What does it want now? It wants a man.' And they took the child of a commoner and cut his throat and poured the blood over the drum and struck it and it sounded loudly. If the drum did not sound when struck it was as if it had boomed an order; its silence was like a prayer. The drum was to show the majesty (*mbusiya*) of the Kyungu, that all the little chiefs at a distance might say: 'Something is happening, let us hear what it is.' Then they all gathered and were told to bring ivory. . . . They needed the blood of a man because their Lord (*Kyala gwabo*, i.e. the Kyungu) had fastened up the drum saying 'I myself am war, there is no other war' . . .

The corpses of those sacrificed to the drum, like those condemned to death, were thrown over the scarp edge of Mbande, to be sucked into the marsh beneath.

Towards the early Kyungus their subjects expressed the feelings of worship and terror appropriate to an irascible divinity.

At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde would sit round praising the Kyungu—the drums went *kinde! kinde!* And they would praise him in antiphony: 'Oh, Kyungu! . . . Great Father! Great Father!—burier of men!—Great Father! Great Father!—Great Father!—O Mpetal!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kiposa!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Kyabala!—Great Father! Great Father! O Striker and Stabber! Great Father! Great Father! O Mwenende! Great Father! Great Father! O Mpolombasambo! Great Father! Great Father! Dweller in the hot sun!—Great Father! Great Father!—O Fish-cater! O Banana-cater!—Great Father! Great Father!'

The general form of this praise-song was identical with that of the prayers in the sacred groves and so it is literally true to say that the nobles of Ngonde worshipped the living Kyungu.

But the majority of their subjects only worshipped from afar in fear and trembling. At Mbande no ordinary commoner was ever conducted into the sacred enclosure, but only the territorial nobles and the elder chiefs, and they only occasionally; while when the Kyungu travelled through his country all men save the

¹ These names are obscure.

643

very oldest fled from his approach. Even in speech fearful circumlocutions were used to refer to his journeying—'The country is on the move'—'the great hill is moving'—'the mystery is coming'. It was taboo both for the old men who stayed to see him, and for those who entered the sacred enclosure, ever to greet him in the usual way. Falling down and clapping the hands was the only greeting for the Kyungu.

From the wives of the Kyungu also men fled in terror, fearing lest they be compromised and thrown over the cliff of Mbande, and this both added to the atmosphere of terror which surrounded him and was an expression of it.

[731]

Of the effects of personal relationships upon public events we heard much less in Ngonde than in Selya for we lived there for a much shorter period, but there were indications that, as in Selya, public misfortune was traditionally attributed to quarrels between the nobles of Mbande and within the family of the Kyungu. One fearful drought was thought to have been caused by the exile of Kyungu's son, Mwakasungula,¹ and men tell how the rain came down in torrents on his return. The nobles also asserted their power of calling on the shades of the Kyungu to punish him when he did wrong, and rebuking him over beer telling him, 'It was we who caused you to be ill, don't do it again'. Since he was killed by his nobles if he really fell ill their power over him was inexorable.

[769]

(d) PALIKYALA

● 778

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PaliKyala is a cave at the north-east corner of Lake Nyasa where sacrifices are made to the hero, Kyala (a). It is on the border between Nyakyusa, Kisi, and Kinga country; the chiefs are Nyakyusa, but of Kinga extraction,² while many of the commoners are Kisi. Nyakyusa is generally spoken as the first language, Kisi as the second, and Nyakyusa, Kinga, and Kisi all sacrifice to Kyala. As indicated in the myth already quoted (*vide supra*, p. 8) the location of the shrine has changed from one cave to another; according to one version, Kyala was driven out by Europeans; according to another, 'the Lake rose and roared and destroyed all the pots in the cave and the roar was heard in the mountains by the Kinga' and after that Kyala moved.

793

The ritual differs from that at Lubaga and Mbande in that

¹ Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, p. 26.

² They are not of the lineage of Lowenche.

782 black and white) animals are killed, with the same symbolism as
 793 in BuKinga.¹ 'We kill a white sheep in the dry season that the
 [789] sun may shine—if we killed a black sheep in summer the wet
 season would last all the year.'

The Kinga pray for fertility of the fields, that illness may pass, that they 'may sleep at home'; the local people² for fertility of the fields and that the pots they make (and on the sale of which they largely depend) may not crack in the firing. The more distant chiefdoms of the Nyakyusa plain sacrifice only in drought or plague—the last sacrifice remembered was during a plague of locusts about 1915, but the Kinga chief Kyelela sent a cow in PaliKyala in July 1937.

778 Like the grove of Lubaga, Kyala's cave is fearful. There is a
 689 story of two men who took a length of creeper from near it to tie up their canoe, and when they got home both went mad. Godfrey Wilson's guide, a young Christian, refused to enter the cave on the grounds that his pagan half-brother had once entered and taken away a potsherd and 'when he got home he went mad'.

¹ Moresby appears to have been misinformed on this point, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-2.

² The potters are primarily Kisi, but neighbouring Nyakyusa have taken to this lucrative trade.

643 often leaks out, but in theory the young men must not know, and
 622 those seized always put up a show of resistance before being
 796 bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no
 [784] man dare flee lest, like a Lwembe falling from the stool, he should
 die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with
 their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there
 in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrel-
 ling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to
 wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman
 washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also
 lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth
 [789] which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a
 symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be
 heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs
 bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one
 body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share
 with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village
 headman performs this function for his chief; others that it is
 another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our
 information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyilu
 (177), who 'came out' in 1953, remained in the hut a month, and
 he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing
 for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by
 [867] their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and
 their future duties. According to Mwambuputa (Mwankuga's
 [130] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out
 Mwanyilu), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs!
 Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!
 And the other senior headman, Kakuju, said: 'Do not beat
 your men, respect them! Feed your people on milk, meat,
 chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name,
 arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior
 kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out!
 War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman,
 [778] rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the
 doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated akuba
 tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show
 that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable
 to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people
 and acclaim him.' The spear of chieftainship is strength, man-

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

53

hood.' Some say that it is not the chief himself who grasps the spear but his senior village headman who pauses in the doorway calling the war cry and rejoicing. However that may be, the spear represents the authority of a ruling chief. At the 'coming out' of Mwanyila (177) and his junior brother Mwabungulu (178), both were secluded and rushed out of the hut, but for Mwabungulu there was no spear since the chieftdom of their father was not divided into independent units.

The heirs separate, each going to where his village is to stand, whether it be pasture land or the site of a former village. The young men build temporary shelters for themselves and proceed to the most important rite of all, the making of fire by friction, using a lion bone as the trough of the drill and a reed as the shaft. Each of the two young chiefs starts the process, then his senior village headmen take over, one twirling the shaft and the other holding the trough. It is difficult to make fire with the bone and reed and great importance is attached to success; the senior headman may even be replaced if he fails, for it is taken as a sign that his headmanship will be a failure. If he succeeds, he is known in future as *alifama gwa lufegwa*—the headman of the fire-making. All the old fires throughout the chieftdom are put out and each appointed headman, in order of precedence, takes fire from his immediate senior and calls to his men: 'You of such and such a village come to me' and gives fire to them. The men, though crowded together in one or two shelters, split into small groups, each with its own fire, to cook. This is interpreted as a symbol of the ending of the old chieftainship and the establishment of the new. 'That fire means a new chief has come, he brings new fire, we throw away the old fire in the houses. . . . ' The old chieftainship is coming to an end, the new has come. The fires are put out in all the homesteads, those of the young men and those of the old men, they make new fire which is taken to every home. . . . ' But why fire? we asked. Because of old . . . we chiefs came with fire, the commoners had not yet got it, they ate raw food only. When we came we slept in men's houses and we lighted fires and cooked food. Men were astonished and said: "Ha! What's this?" They were burned so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember still. 'Fire is lordship (*ubwala*)', therefore a junior chief who goes through the ritual with his brothers does not make fire with his headmen; only those who are to rule do so. In other contexts the lighting of fire by friction is a

[643] symbol of potency,¹ and we suggest that this also is an element in
 [622] the ritual of the 'coming out', for the fertility of the chieftdom is
 [796] thought to be bound up with the virility of the chief.

[372] There are a number of stories about the way in which Mwakyusa (38) surpassed his brothers and one of them tells how each brother made fire and set alight the pasture land (for traditionally parts of the pasture land were fired each season to provide fresh grass for grazing in the early spring), and the fires started by the elder brothers soon died out, but that started by Mwakyusa 'burned for a whole month'. This is interpreted as an omen of his greatness as a chief: fire, potency, lordship are inextricably linked.

At the 'coming out' all things are made new. No matter how
 [561] crowded the country the young men must move to new sites and
 [356] the shelters in which they live must be new, though, as will be shown, they do not necessarily move to unoccupied country. On their new site the young men live as bachelors, milking their cows and cooking for themselves on their new fires the meat of the cattle they seize, the bananas and grain brought by their wives and mothers. Meat is abundant, for the young chief now rules and has the right to take what cattle he chooses, even from the villages of the old men in his country. 'It was as if there were war,
 [726] the young men seized cattle, food, and women', and though they did not fight their fathers directly, as the Meru did, they clearly asserted their power. And, as so common further south, the accession of a chief was the occasion for raiding the neighbours: the young men, we were told, went forthwith to test the efficacy of
 [778] the magic spears and the medicines with which their chief and headmen had been treated. Or the chiefs might lead a battue to clear the country of wild pig, as Mwakatumbula (Mwambete 169) did directly after his 'coming out'. Well fed and exuberant, the
 [574] young men dance and display their cattle, and entertain visitors lavishly, for every chief seeks to attract men to his country by his hospitality.

Then they set up the sign and memorial of the chieftainship:
 [824] they plant cuttings of two species² of *figs*, *indels* which is much used as a shade tree, and *ampondapanda* from which bark-cloth is
 [423] made. Close to these the first house of the chief and that of his senior village headmen are built, and the trees also mark the

¹ Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 124, 145.

² When writing *Cool Company* I mistakenly thought that two cuttings of the same species were planted. Cf. *Cool Company*, p. 27.

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

57

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief. 643
583
[834]

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,¹ are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*akuska*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*akuska*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'. 643
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(b) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifagile* and their function is to create *amaga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *abwiga*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.² The *ifagile* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*abugan*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy 643
778
[787]
[754]

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 202.² Monica Wilson, *God Country*, pp. 57-100.

643 cattle and protecting one's own, and to attract men to the
 778 country.

788 The two senior sons of a chief are given powdered *ikingila* to
 643 drink from early childhood; at the 'coming out' they lie on it and
 778 drink it again with their village headmen, some is buried beneath
 778 their ritual trees, and the chief's homestead is treated with it
 periodically. One form of *ikingila* is made of the heart of a lion and
 the heart of a leopard, together with the scrapings from a charred
 root, and one of its qualities is to create lions or leopards which
 guard the trees under which it is buried. 'They make anyone who
 has cut a branch of one of the trees for firewood tremble at night,
 he trembles and returns the wood; they do not kill, but they stay
 roaring there until he repents.' Now part of the dignity (*ubusiya*)
 of a chief is that lions and leopards attend him; they roam his
 country; they are his familiars (*imbege*). 'The sons of Lwembe'
 [774] lack the fearful power of their great ancestor who 'rode a lion like a
 donkey', but they are believed to command familiars which clear
 the country of the wild pig that destroy men's gardens, and protect
 the sacred groves by terrifying any sacrilegious person who dares
 chop wood where he should fear. But they do not kill men or
 cattle. That is what distinguishes them from 'God's lions which
 kill cattle even by day' and the man-eaters made by sorcerers to
 [754] destroy those they hate. There is no hint of lycanthropy—our
 informants denied emphatically that chiefs, dead or alive, turned
 into *imbege*, but they 'follow the chief' when he travels.

A second *ikingila*, sprinkled on the chief's mat when he is
 secluded, and drunk with his two senior village headmen, is
 made of red, black, and shining white or yellow pebbles, which
 are ground up and mixed with *imbege*, a medicine brought by
 the Kinga, but the symbolism of these ingredients remains
 obscure.

The greatest of the *ifagila*, used only for the chief himself,
 is *ipifwila*, a terrible substance with power perilously like that of
 witchcraft. When either of the senior wives of a chief gives birth
 [754] to a son a little is hidden in the litter on which she lies; it is put
 into the litter on which the heirs lie at the 'coming out'; and into
 the sacred tails and trumpets which are carried into battle. Like
 other medicines of chieftainship, *ipifwila* is used to give the
 chief majesty (*ubusiya*), 'that people who meet him may fear
 him'; that he and his warriors may appear fierce; that they may
 be 'heavy and strong' in war; that when the trumpet is blown it

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

59

may 'make the enemy fearful and sue for peace'; and that even men who have left his country may return to him. And it is so powerful that the dose must be carefully adapted to the individual. If a chief is already 'heavy' with an inherited python he is given the merest fragment, but a gentle fellow thought to be 'light', 'empty', is given more, that his words may carry weight. Too much will make a chief harsh (*nkali*)—'he will always be beating men'—and he must be given an antidote to calm him down. Too much in the tails causes them to 'fly through the air at night, gleaming, and throttle the cows'. This is the danger of *inyifuila*, that it may act like the pythons in the bellies of witches and kill men and cattle. Controlled by a chief it is held to be reasonably safe, though Kalobo, Mwaipopo's (116) second wife, who was grumbling because no tail had been lodged in her house was told that she did not know how lucky she was for '*inyifuila* is very fearful—it enters the belly, it makes itself into familiars'.

The use of *inyifuila* is forbidden to commoners. In Ngonde, with its hierarchy of chiefs, it was the danger of attempting to equal one of superior rank that was emphasized. 'If a commoner sprinkles *inyifuila* on himself saying, "I let me surpass my fellows", and he meets a chief (who is entitled to use it) then he dies immediately because he said to himself, "I also am a chief"; and 'If an Ngana chief dances and sprinkles his spear with *inyifuila* . . . and then meets Kyungu, he dies.' In the more democratic atmosphere of BuNyakyusa chiefs were 'very angry' if commoners used it, but it was the danger of its acting like witchcraft and throttling men and cattle and, eventually, its owner, that men spoke of most. We heard of half a dozen men—among them the most successful trader of Selya—who were reputed to use it 'to surpass their fellows' and 'get rich' and one case actually came to Court. Mwaipopo, the chief (116), raised the matter himself:

Why does this thing go about at night? I have seen it myself, it shines, I know it. It is that with which the doctors treat us chiefs to make us impressive [i.e. *inyifuila*]. Do you not know, you commoners, that we chiefs have prohibited its use in our countries? Ask your fellow Mandala! He is bad, he planted this thing, it kills you people.

So two village headmen went and called Mandala who lived near Ngulyo, and brought him to Court. There he was asked: 'Why did you keep this which kills people?' Mandala denied vehemently saying, 'I have not planted this.' But Mwaipopo

643 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
 778 which kills people!"' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
 789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
 [754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the
 headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew
inyiswila) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is
 not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the
 chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he
 brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor
 to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did
 not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his
 country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and
 Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case
 of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyiswila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh'
 which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we
 were told:

A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They
 build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors
 all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to
 get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they
 have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyiswila*; some is brought to
 Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors
 who give it to the chief.

[925] A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
inyiswila from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not
 from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a
 goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed
 on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for
 medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
 [787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and
 the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as
 tested *inyiswila*.

[825] 'That snake is awful (*nipa fjo*), no one approaches to kill it.
 No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the
 python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
 [821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say
 it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a
 river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are
 not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is
shunipa (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

61

in rulers and is thought to be transferred to them in the medicine brewed out of python blood.

It will be noticed that the central mystery of Lubaga and the sources of the most powerful medicine are the same, and the medicine is akin to witchcraft. The shades, medicines, and witchcraft are distinguished and are thought to operate independently, but they are all manifestations of a mystical power which is logically one, though none of our informants saw it as that.

We referred earlier to the function of the chiefs' medicines in giving courage in war and luck in raiding. Certain emblems of chieftainship are carried in war: a sacred spear, a bamboo trumpet (*ililonge*) or a great war-horn (*ingangabwite*), and several giraffe or zebra tails (*imiswigala*), and all of these have little horns filled with *inyifiwila* attached to them. Of the trumpet it was said: 'You hear it and your heart swells and a great trembling comes over you and you fight.' 'The chiefs forbid them to be blown now because their blowing always brings war.' Each of the senior village headmen is given a tail at the 'coming out' and he went into battle with it bound on to his upper arm. A notable warrior was sometimes given one also. To lose a tail in battle was comparable to losing the regimental colours and there are epics of their loss and recovery. If the leader who carried it saw that he was surrounded he would try to pass it back, or he might hide it on the ground:

then that night they would go back to the spot and they would find it because it shone with a light and made a bubbling noise, *burukut*, *burukut*, *burukut*. . .

In the old days the medicine [in the tails] was frequently renewed; for there was war, and it gave the headmen the power of dreaming of the course of war. . . . But now, since you have brought peace to the land, no one renews it, and it has gone rotten.

However, the tails in Mwaipopo's chiefdom were thus treated in December 1937, and we saw it done. The four tails, with six tiny medicine horns and a calabash of medicated ointment, were formally handed over to the care of Kalinga, Mwaipopo's (116) chief wife, having previously been in the care of his mother. Mwaipopo himself was there with two kinsmen and the three commoner priests Kissogota, Njobakosa, and Ngulyo, but not Kasitile (86) since he was 'father-in-law' to Kalinga and could not meet her, though he was informed of the ritual. Kalobo, the second senior wife, looked on. Kalinga poured out the ointment

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643 and Mwaipopo and Kissogota smeared it over the tails which
 778 were then put out with the horns to dry in the sun. Mwaipopo
 789 suggested getting Mwaisyelage, the doctor, to treat them
 further, and the others agreed saying: 'Let Mwaipopo find some-
 one, that the earth may be good, that it be heavy.' Njobakosa
 had spoken earlier of the cattle giving much milk after the
 treatment of the tails. And they went on to discuss the fact that
 the young chief Mwankuga II (151) had begotten no child by the
 wife inherited from his elder brother (150) whose place he had
 taken. Thus the function of the chief in creating plenty and
 [842] fertility was in the priests' minds, and there may be some link
 between the virility of the chief and success in war—one inform-
 ant spoke of the chief's senior wives jumping over the tails
 immediately after the consummation of their marriage—but
 of this we are not certain. What is common knowledge is that the
 tails are 'for seizing cattle', and they are associated with 'manure
 and blood'. We were told at the conclusion of the ritual: 'Formerly
 we should have gone tomorrow, after this treating of the tails, to
 fight.'

Besides medicines for majesty, courage, and popularity as rulers,
 chiefs use medicines to protect themselves against the fearfulness
 of the groves in which they sacrifice, medicines to 'close the
 country to hunger', to make their capitals grand, and to cause
 thieves who have stolen, to walk round and round until caught.

Medicines are regarded as essential to authority, victory, and
 successful rule, and the kind used and the dose given are adjusted
 to the status and character of the individual. 'Village headmen
 [622] do not drink the most important *ikingila*; they drink a lesser one,
imbinga; the senior headman is given most, the junior less.' And
 the chief's wives do not drink *ikingila* at all, but only a powder
 suitable for them. But the use of these medicines has its dangers.
 The chief, like other people who have been drinking protective
 medicines, does not eat the new crops grown on fields fertilized
 [754] by ash without fortifying himself. The danger is said to come from
 the burnt rubbish heaps, because medicines for defence against
 witches and sorcerers are burnt in them and, as we have seen,
 certain of the medicines which the chief uses create a power akin
 to witchcraft. He tastes the new millet ritually in June, the cow
 [789] peas in September, and pumpkin leaves in November; and he also
 tastes the 'new earth' at the break of the rains in October or early
 November. 'We chiefs fear that the medicines we have drunk will

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

63

turn round in the belly; people say the earth will go bad in us.' 643
 'A child who has drunk medicines will be ill, the smell of the new 778
 food or the wet earth goes to the belly.' 789

The chief eats the first fruits and medicines with the commoner [788]
 who lies down with him at the commencement of his 'coming out'
 and 'is his wife to taste with him the first fruits and powdered
 medicines' and is 'fearful' like the medicines. He is identified with [644]
 the chief's body and may be compared with the *isithumunu* of the
 Pondo chief¹ or the *insila* of the Swazi.² His function is to protect
 the chief against the medicines themselves.

(c) DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Both because of a chief's descent, and because of his use of 643
 medicines, mystical power resides in his body. 763
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In the old days a ruling chief was not allowed to die, but was buried
 while still living, because they feared that if he became unconscious
 before death he would take away all the food with him, and great
 hunger would come on us. Men feared *ifingila* medicine in his belly.
 They said: 'If he dies naturally many of his people will die. . . . He
 should go alive.' And formerly they buried him with the son of a
 commoner, also alive, for they said, 'Let him enjoy the company of
 his man on the road.' When a chief was sick before the coming out of
 his sons they tried to keep him alive if possible, but if he was clearly
 going to die then they buried him like this; after the coming out they
 hastened his death—but only if he were ill. That was why the chiefs
 fear the 'coming out' of their sons so greatly. Had Mwaipopo lived
 in the old days and his heir been alive he would have been buried
 during his last illness.

When a ruling chief was sick the village headmen sent the chief's
 wives away and looked after him themselves. Then, if they thought he
 would, or should, die, they tore off all his nails, those of his toes and
 those of his fingers, and pulled out his hair, and put them in a pot.
 After that they buried him by night still alive, with a live person, the
 child of a commoner whom they had seized very secretly. The pot
 stayed in the house of the senior wife of the chief who had died, and [778]
 they said, 'It is the chief, we are with him still.' This was the sacred
 pot for the sacred beer.³ They kept silence about the death for a month
 or perhaps two months, saying: 'Let the chief go away first.'

And when a younger brother, a junior chief, died, though he died

¹ M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 390.

² H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 76.

³ Kasitile flatly denied this, *vide infra*, p. 64.

643 naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him,
 763 yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the
 766 senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a
 766 person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with
 a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but
 still they are buried at night.

Kasitile denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

[793] When the chief was very ill we priests came, Njobakosa and Ngulyo, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stopping up the nostrils. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the sacred grove and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwakagile (59) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has defeated us', and they tore off his nails—yes,

● [718] before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the *ifingila*, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an *umwali* (*Chrophora excelsa*) tree at the village headman's, the *umwali* which grew at the homestead of Njobakosa [the grandfather of the present Njobakosa]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have taken the power of growth (*ifugo*) from the chief, those nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (*ifjala fila newili fyo ifugo lya kisu*).

[778] Kasitile took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwaipaja (G.W.), when you cut these nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (*ilifugo*) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kasitile explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwaipopo (116) succeeded

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

65

Njobakosa [the grandfather] ran off with them to Mwaihojo in the hills, where he died so that they disappeared and were never returned to his fellow-priests. Therefore they bury the relics by the *umwali* tree, at his old homestead, lest someone run off with them again. . . . Their hair and nails of the chief are buried there, the earth of the chief will always be heavy. All this is very secret. . . .

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Mwandisi (107, the old blind chief) told us that

When a chief dies they take his nails and hair and put them in the house of his wife who buries them with medicine for fertility of the soil (*ifugo*), then at the time of planting the village headmen come and take that medicine to plant the food with. This was done on the death of the chief Mwakalukwa (141) and the chief Mwakalinga (142) and others for, it is said, the chief goes off with our fertility (*imboto yetu*).

Thus, though our informants differed slightly about the details, they were agreed that the power of growth lies in the nails and hair of a chief, and these must be taken from him while he is yet alive, and later used to fertilize the earth.

The burial of a chief's son with a live black calf we saw for ourselves, and the wailing was delayed until after the burial. A distinctive funeral of this sort is accorded to all the sons of a ruling chief and his senior daughter, but not (we were told) to more distant kinsmen. The other mark of a royal funeral is the slaughter of many head of cattle to accompany the deceased and to feed the mourners. At the death of the chief Mwakyembe (99) over 300 head were killed, and Mwaipopo (116) killed thirty head at the funeral of his mother. Since a chief has many wives and daughters he has many affines all of whom must bring cows to kill, and he also has a large herd himself on which to draw. To fail to feed his people at a funeral is to fail as a chief. The whole country mourns for two or three weeks, no one going to work in the fields, or occupying themselves with ordinary business. All smear themselves with mud, as if they were kinsmen, and even the men bind their belts tightly with mourning belts 'that they may not tremble'.

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(d) THE CHIEF AND THE 'BREATH OF MEN'

Fruitfulness, the power of growth (*imboto*), lies in the chief's body and the village headmen have no share in it; they only tend it, taking care that it does not disappear with the dead. But the headmen share with the chief and the priests the duty of 'watching

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643 over the country by day and by night', and power (*amanga*)
 ● 778 to see the enemies of darkness (that is, the witches) is thought to
 622 come to each priest or village headman from a python in his
 belly. No one can fulfil his duties as a ruler and defender unless he
 is 'heavy', but to have a python inside one is *also* the mark of a
 witch. Pressed on the point the Nyakyusa hold that a chief or
 [754] village headman only has one python whereas witches have
 several, but this distinction is not maintained consistently, and
 many of our informants were agreed that the power of witchcraft
 and the power to see and fight witches were one and the same.
 The essential distinction lies in the use to which the power is put;
 wrongly used it is 'witchcraft' (*ubulosi*); rightly used to defend the
 village or to punish evil-doers it is 'the breath of men' (*imbepo sya*
bandu) and how any particular case is labelled depends upon the
 viewpoint of the speaker. The victim of a misfortune and his kin
 will indignantly attribute it to 'witchcraft' when other people
 regarded it as due to his wrongdoing and a punishment brought
 about by 'the breath of men'.

Each village headman, together with those of the village who
 are 'heavy', is thought competent both to defend those of his
 village whom he judges innocent against witches from outside or
 within, and to punish wrong-doers, by bringing upon them the
 chill of fever. Hence those who have angered their neighbours and
 believe themselves to be attacked by 'witches', take refuge in
 another village.

The power of witchcraft is believed to be inherited, rarely
 acquired; but the power of defence is both inherited and in-
 creased by drinking medicines, and there seems little doubt that
 the medicines drunk by chief and village headmen at the 'coming
 out' to create in themselves *ubusisya*—majesty, awesomeness—also
 develop *amanga*, the power to see and fight witches. Indeed, one
 of our Christian informants insisted that *ubusisya bo bulosi*—
 'awesomeness is witchcraft'.

These ideas have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.¹
 Here I am only concerned to show the importance of the belief in
 'the breath of men' in the relationship between chief and village
 headmen. Not only do village headmen have the ultimate power of
 life and death over their chief, but they are thought to bring
 illness upon him if he acts unconstitutionally or disregards their
 advice, or fails in his duty of providing beef for his men. He may

¹ Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 91-135.

THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

67

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically. 643 778 622

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.¹ Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.² Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125). [754]

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen³ went to consult an oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause. [842] [753] [787] [782]

¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.² *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.³ Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

- 643 As we have seen, the chief's fearsome medicine *inyifwila* is
 778 thought to be very dangerous, and too much in the tails may cause
 622 them 'to fly about throttling men and cattle', but a chief is never
 [754] accused of working witchcraft; it is inconceivable to the Nyakyusa
 [789] that he could be. If the tails have got out of hand they are treated
 by a doctor 'to close them up'; no one suggests that the chief should
 get rid of them. It is commoners, 'black people', who are witches
 —cannibals, the eaters of raw flesh—as opposed to chiefs who,
 since the dawn of history, have killed cattle for meat and cooked
 their food like civilized men. But the distinction does not extend
 very far; junior kinsmen of the chief are 'commoners' and may
 well be accused of practising witchcraft.

[182] There was a delicate balance of power in the Nyakyusa constitution between hereditary chief and commoner headmen and the belief in the power of medicines and of witchcraft was an integral part of it. The chief provided fruitfulness by the power of his own body and his medicines; all men depended upon him for their well-being—food, cattle, children, success in war; but he in his turn depended upon the goodwill of his men led by their village headmen; without it he shivered and fell ill, only to be buried by them 'with the breath still in his body' lest the power of growth disappear with his breathless corpse.

Something of the quality of this mutual dependence and fear is conveyed in Kasitile's account of his own illness quoted in Chapter VIII.

(e) THE NECESSITY FOR HARMONY

- 182 The welfare of the chiefdom is thought to depend upon
 643 harmony between the chief and his village headmen and priests,
 622 and also between the chief and his kinsmen. Any friction between
 793 them may result in public misfortune as well as sickness to the
 individual at fault. The quarrel of Kasitile, the priest, first with
 [753] the Kinga priests, and then with the commoner priests of Mwaipopo's chiefdom was believed to affect the crops and the weather,
 [821] as well as Kasitile's own health (*vide infra*, pp. 124-41), and
 [688] Mwaipopo's failure to tell Kasitile formally of the death of their kinsman led to rain which spoiled the funeral dance. A quarrel between the lineages of two chiefs which should have sacrificed together was said to have been followed by a very poor millet crop (*vide infra*, pp. 79-80, 118, 136).
 643 How the personal relationship of a chief with his kinsmen is
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THE RITUAL OF CHIEFTAINSHIP

69

thought to affect the whole country was illustrated in Mwaihojo's⁶⁴³ chieftdom where the people were plagued by wild pig destroying⁶⁰² their gardens. Mwaihojo (147) had a longstanding quarrel with⁵⁷⁸ his half-brother, Mwakyonde (148), whose country he had seized after their 'coming out'. Mwakyonde became famous as a doctor, and he was a great raconteur and beer-drinker, a regular Silenus,^[157] the boon companion of many influential men, whereas his brother was cold and irascible; so although he had lost his chieftaincy, Mwakyonde had considerable power. In February 1937, four lions were seen in the adjoining chieftdom of Mwaipopo (116), and we heard pig squealing as it was killed. Angombwike (whose father lived near Mwakyonde in Mwaihojo's country) explained to us: 'People say that these are Mwakyonde's lions. . . . Lion-makers have bundles of twigs which they put into the long grass, and which turn into lions. Long ago Mwakyonde made lions and they came and killed all the pigs, and the country (Mwaihojo's) was at peace, but he quarrelled with Mwaihojo and put his bundles of twigs into his box and locked it up. Then the country was filled with pig, and buck, and elephant, and all the crops were spoiled, and so it is still. Now Mwakyonde has begun to be friendly with Mwaipopo (116); they enjoy each other's company and drink beer together, and so he is making lions again in Kipungu, the land where Mwaipopo is hoeing, to kill the pig for Mwaipopo. They say Mwaipopo has given him a country in secret.' Now Mwaihojo claimed as his the forest country, which Mwaipopo's men had begun to colonize, therefore to aid Mwaipopo there was an effective slap at Mwaihojo. The lions came into Mwaihojo's country—we heard them repeatedly close to our camp—but they did not clear the pig.

Then, in March, Mwakyonde was supposed to be using a new medicine he had obtained to scare off pig from the fields. We^[778] asked him about it. 'Oh, it has failed. The pigs are still there eating. I've done everything I should but without effect. I think^[775] that the pigs are possessed by the shades (*sili nimindu ingulube*). 'Why?' we asked. 'Because my elder brother (Mwaihojo) and I are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) the shades are angry.'

So the destruction of men's gardens was traced to the quarrel between the chief and his brother.

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

(a) THE PLACE, OCCASION, AND FORM OF SACRIFICE

- 778. A CHIEF is buried near the trees planted at his 'coming out' and around the grave a thicket grows up. It is taboo for men to cut saplings or brushwood there and since trees grow very fast in the
769 climate and soil of the Nyakyusa valley, the thicket soon becomes
[137] a grove, and there sacrifices to the dead chief are made. The priests look for the stone planted at his marriage, and place the offering beside it. How long a chief is so honoured depends on how conspicuous he was as a ruler or warrior, and perhaps also on
[782] whether the sacrifices are judged to be efficient in producing rain and health or not. Mbyanga and Kabale, two groves which are particularly honoured, were the shrines of founders of expanding lineages. At Mbyanga was planted a cutting of a tree which sprouted from the grave of Mwakisambwe (30) who had first occupied the country in which Mbyanga is situated. He is often spoken of as having been 'buried' at Mbyanga, in fact he was carried back ten miles to Lubaga, whence he had come, for burial. But he is worshipped at Mbyanga and we attended a sacrifice there for which his great-great-great-grandson, Mwaihojo (147) the chief, provided a cow, and Mwaihojo's grandsons ate the holy food. In contrast to this, the grave of Mwaipopo's (116) younger brother, who had once ruled a country but was defeated in war and whose sons had died, was completely neglected; no one sacrificed there. We knew more than a dozen chiefs' groves at which sacrifices were made, and there must have been a great many more in different parts of BuNyakyusa.

- 643 Since every ruling chief normally had two heirs, sacrifices
769 involved co-operation between independent chiefdoms—two chiefs at the grove of their father, four at that of their grandfather, and so on. But if there is friction between the chiefs, some branches of the lineage cease to participate, saying that the connexion is 'too distant', and celebrate at the groves of their nearer ancestors only. This happened at the sacrifice of Mbyanga which we
[578] attended (*vide infra*, pp. 79-81). The sanction for co-operation is
[688] the belief that quarrelling between kinsmen annoys the shades and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
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9. SHRINE IN THE SACRED GROVE, MBYANGA

[Facing p. 71]

769 each name mentioned: 'We give this meat to you so-and-so.'
 [782] 'May the children sleep, may we all sleep, may it rain, may there
 be much food, may milk be plentiful.' Then follows a communion
 in which young 'grand-children' of the dead share the sacred
 meat and beer. The shades eat together, they break off firewood
 [775] there from the tree, they rejoice, some clap their hands to give
 thanks.' Finally, a hut is built for the shades and half-formed
 bananas and sweet milk are left in it to 'ripen'. It was thought
 that if the sacrifice were accepted they did so miraculously quickly
 and the milk increased in quantity, the bananas in size. Among the
 Kukwe a white and grey cock and a hen were offered as well as the
 cow or bull. An account of two of the sacrifices we attended will
 make this clearer.

(8) SACRIFICE TO MWAIJONGA

769 In July 1935, two days after the Kings had sacrificed at
 782 Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 30), the chief Mwaipopo (116) came to tell
 us that he was going to sacrifice at the grove of his father, Mwai-
 jonga (8a). Ngulyo, heir to Mwaipopo's second senior headman
 and now his priest, came with the chief, and he remarked,

Kasile (8b) summoned us some time ago. He and Njolakwa and
 Klamguta¹ and I thought that the hunger was very great indeed, and
 Kasile sent us to tell Mwaipopo (116) to look for a cow and sacrifice.
 Then Mwaipopo agreed, because the hunger is indeed very great; he
 has not yet found the cow; when he has, we shall inform Kasile and
 then kill it in Mwaipopo's grove.

Mwaipopo 'found' the cow at once for next morning Kasile told
 us

Mwambene (Mwaipopo, 116) came with Ngulyo yesterday to say he
 had found the cow. This evening, after sunset, because there is a moon
 (second quarter) I shall pray at my place with water; and Mwaipopo
 will pray at his homestead also with water. Tomorrow morning they
 will kill the cow. I shall not be there—I never go—I stay at home and
 they [i.e. the shades] find me at home.

The same evening (10 July 1935) Godfrey Wilson went to
 Kasile's homestead just after sunset. Kasile took a calabash cup
 hanging under the eaves saying: 'No one ever drinks from this
 cup, it is for praying only. At my death it will go to my heir to use
 for prayer.' He filled the cup from his wife's water-pot, and then

¹ Heir of two other village headmen of Mwaipopo, also priest of his grove.

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

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plunged into it a glowing brand from the fire. Then he went to a low tree in the middle of a cultivated field where the byre of his senior brother (85) had been. He took a root of 'blessed grass' with him, and as he stood before the tree he took a couple of bites of the root and two sips of water. Then he blew out the water in a cloud twice and he spoke for twenty minutes and mentioned thirty-five names or more: 'Thou Mwakanjoki (60), ... thou Kalezi (18), Mwakalebezi (19), ... Mwakir'ya (56) and Mwampondole (27), ... Kikungubezi, Silobwike, Kyamba Kitili, Nyanigwa,¹ ... Mwalpaja (21.) He talked about the punishment of 'Mwakagile (their child)' (i.e. of Mwalpapo (116) who was here identified with his grandfather) ... 'Kyala is there ... he sees Mwalpapo. He says "Do this ritual, I am rejoiced".' At another point Kasitile added the name 'Jesus' to a list of ancestors. He prayed for food, children, and cattle. ... 'Give us bananas, millet, maize, may children be born in the morning and in the evening, may cows calve in the morning and in the evening.' He spoke of the old sacrifices of Mwalubangu (58) and others which had been accepted ...

Now Mwalpapo has found a cow, he has learnt his lesson, he has agreed; receive him tomorrow, grant him food, give food to all in Selya ... to Mwakumo (56), Mwalende (61). ... You are proud (all assemblies) to send so much hunger. ... When I went down to the plain men asked me 'Are you taking all the food with you?' I said 'Yes', but now I have come up, the earth has come up. You alone remain and hold back. I ask you to send food again. I alone remain of all the contemporaries of Mwaljonga (82). I alone am Kasitile. All the people of Kyungu (16), of Mwakyusa (58), all know I am Kasitile. I alone remain. The birds say, the snakes say that I am Kasitile. There is trouble all round in BuNidali, BuKungu, BuKings, but we thought here there would be no trouble in the country of Mwakilima (111) and Mwanjala (77), but there is. They have sacrificed, the Kings have come to Luhaga. Mwakilima (111) has begun, Mwakagile (i.e. Mwalpapo, 116, here identified with his grandfather, 50) sleeps with hunger, receive him tomorrow. I 'treat' the earth, all treat their earth, all over the country.

Next morning early the chiefs and priests met near Mwaljonga's grove which is some hundreds of yards from Ipinda, his senior village, where his *iside* tree still stands.² The talk turned on the

¹ These four are the Kings' priests with hereditary titles, who serve at Luhaga.

² Why the grove was not beside the *iside* tree as it usually is was not made clear to us.

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[771] ●

769 weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Iplinda, Mwai-
782 popo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold
as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves
rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already
been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we
were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 116) handed the
axe to Mwanysu (his junior kinsman *sic* p. 84) who killed
'the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate,
(578) waiting for the other priests, Njabakosa and Kinsigata. After a
discussion about certain persons who had not come because the
last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is
(714) forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we
pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the
shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasile's heir, was
there but not Kasile (86) himself. Someone asked whether
Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never
asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.' . . .
Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of
Ngulyo and Kinsigata.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not
before?'

After an hour's delay Njabakosa arrived, and shortly after him
Kinsigata, who apologised, saying: 'I am late because my child
has just died.'

Kinsigata and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out
on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of
the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the
tail to Kasile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*ipemwaga*) from both forelegs,
• (778) and with Kinsigata's help he chopped off twenty-three small
pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10
all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*akafga*)² was found
under a tree. Mwaitsija (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared
the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the
stone, then he threw the meat which Kinsigata was holding on
two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five
or six men spoke:

¹ Tandale the son-in-law had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

² It was not clear whether this was the one placed at Mwaipopo's coming out or
not, since his table was some hundreds of yards away.

767 In this grove of Kahala three chiefs in particular gather together,
 782 Mwakilulele (87 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and
 Mwanguka (84 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamela
 (86 K) and Mwakilasa (89 K) in whose country the grove is situated.
 The senior, Mwakilulele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows
 saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilulele seeks a black cow
 and Mwanguka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings
 two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So
 they go to the grove with their children, young boys and girls and the
 junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of

• (77) Mwangumale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
 some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the
 liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs
 (joints) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet
 banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw
 them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise
 the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there
 be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help
 us Kyala, thou Ndolombwike (?), thou Kajubili (?), you created us,
 together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we
 may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase
 and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers
 of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died.
 Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young
 children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in
 the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish
 the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer
 and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash
 and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
 and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to
 (78) put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they
 have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately
 and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers
 have heard'.

Putting out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces
 of meat, and sticking feathers into the ground means: 'May the fathers
 beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish
 and food be plentiful. . . . Children finish the food because they are
 like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades
 have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it
 close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives
 them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and head which stay there
 (79) symbolize fertility (adon), so that when we eat they may help us and
 the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the
 sacrificial meat (the joints) and drinking the beer in the calabash

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

89

and cup is because this food is sacrificed to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Ngomale do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A black cow is used in the grove because groves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (*ubwisa*) of the grove.

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kukwe chiefs sent offerings to the BaNgumba, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us BaNgumba; we were owners of the soil, the Kukwe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe stem of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the stem of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the shades] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .¹

They say that very long ago we BaNgumba, we sons of Kasyapula, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the firstcomers fled. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing.

(e) MODERN CHANGES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the groves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice probably ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitile (86) said one day:

Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwaipopo (116) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwaipopo and told him to tell his

¹ According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to *Ambumba* but the same passage refers to *Ambumba* or *Kiala* meaning God. It is not clear whether the two names were equated by Kukwe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (*Journal de l'Unité des Frères*, 1894.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Foster for drawing my attention to this valuable Journal.

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COMMUNAL RITUALS OF THE NYAKYUSA

269 priests to sacrifice to his father and elder brother so that fertility may
 782 return and men may eat sweet potatoes, but he does nothing.

177 A conversation between Kantiile and Mwanyono, his fellow priest (see p. 76), was also instructive on this point:

The soil has changed, we are not like those of old, we are different. Mwakiambove (90) had power; when he prayed the thunder crashed and rain fell in torrents. In the old days when the Kings came they came with drums and we all feared them, what they said was done—they did not have to say much—just a few words and it was done. But now they spend all their time explaining things and talking and we do not do anything. . . .

MWANYONO: I have sent people time and again to Mwalipope (7) for a cow, but he just insults us. . . . I have asked Mwalipope (143) about celebrating. . . .

KANTIILE: What did he say?

MWANYONO: I don't know . . . if he is wise . . .

KANTIILE (boasting in): Well, you had better admit that the chiefs do not respect you—the chiefs say: 'It is European times now.'

G.W.: What do they fear? The Government does not affect the ritual, does it?

KANTIILE: They are unwilling to part with the cows which I take for sacrifice, they do not like to lose their cows. In the old days they feared, and when we said: 'We do not sleep, celebrate in the grove', they agreed quickly, for they feared that we, their men, would move to another chieftain.

(5) THE FIRST FRUITS

269 No communal ritual of the first fruits is celebrated among the
 782 Nyakyusa as in Ngonde,¹ but after the millet harvest a little grain is
 [241] collected from every homestead and later brewed into beer which
 [793] is offered to the shades of the chief. In Mwalipope's country the offerings of millet were collected by the priest, Ngubya, who, with his colleagues Kiasogola and Njobakura, took it to Kalinga, senior widow of the late chief (112). She was custodian of a sacred pot inherited by the chief from his predecessors, in which the offerings of millet are stored, and this is the pot which, according to some informants, also contained the power of growth—the nails and hair torn from the dead chief (see *supra*, pp. 64-5). When the new crop was reaped Kalinga almost emptied the pot, refilled it with the fresh grain, and brewed beer with the old. There had once been a sacred winnowing basket used in preparing the beer, but

¹ Geoffrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Nyankya*, p. 25.

SACRIFICES AT THE GROVES OF CHIEFS

85

It was stolen by Ngoni raiders. When the brewing was ripe, the chief sought a calabash of curds and Kalinga cut a stem of bananas, and the priests ate and drank in her hut, together with junior kinsmen of the chief's family, but not the chief himself. As they drank they prayed:

Oh thou Mwakagile (53) give us millet, may it be plentiful, and may the milk be plentiful and may the bananas grow.

One pot of beer was due to Kasile, the priest, and he would leave it overnight in his house.

The shades come and drink a lot, only a little beer is left in the morning. . . . then the bananas flourish and there is much fertility in the homesteads. . . . The sacred pot gives fertility of the soil to the whole country. [775]
[778] ●

A very bitter quarrel flared up while we were in Selya because [575]
Kasile came upon Ngulyo and his colleagues drinking the sacred beer without their having sent him his pot, or even notifying him of the brewing. The repercussions of this are discussed in chapter IX.

CHAPTER VI
LAND AND POWER

643 THE CRUX of the chiefs' 'coming out' was a redistribution of power
361 and of land, and we must pause in our description of the ritual
423 cycle to discuss the relation between chiefdoms and villages and
the land, and to consider more closely the balance of power
between successive generations.

(a) THE TERRITORIAL ALIGNMENT OF
CHIEFDOMS AND VILLAGES

173 Tradition makes it clear that the heroes came to a sparsely
361 occupied country and that their descendants gradually spread
out as their numbers increased. The settlers chose to live on
hillsides overlooking the surrounding country. Lobaga and
[103] Mbande, the seats of the two 'divine kings' are commanding sites.
[778] The grave of Kabale, where the ancestors of the Kukwe chiefs
first established themselves, is on an eminence rising from the
plateau, and Kambaraka (near the Mbanda bridge) on which the
early chiefs Mwalipaja (21) and Mwalipopo (26) were buried is a
hill very like Mbande, overlooking the plain.

961 Unlike most of their neighbours the Nyakyusa show a preference
for cleared and cultivated land, planted with bamboos and the
[124] oil-bearing *sapagali* trees (*Trichilia app.*)¹ as well as the great
umusi (*Croplera andia*) which, in their view, adds dignity to
the homestead.² A study of the trees planted at the 'coming out'
and the sacred groves in Mwalipopo's chiefdom (C 24)³ shows that
for four generations the ruling chiefs (descendants of Mwalipopo
28) have established their principal villages within a quarter of a
mile of one another, and for seven generations the descendants of
Mwaliambo (30) have lived within two or three miles of one
another (side plan, p. 101), though there were acres of fertile land

¹ I am indebted to Mr. P. B. Nightingale, Forestry Officer, Tabora, for giving me the botanical names of these and other trees.

² cf. Monica Wilson, *God Country*, pp. 77-8.

³ C followed by a number is the reference number of a chiefdom as listed in the genealogies of chiefs.

LAND AND POWER

95

ages, they sometimes build in villages of different generations. When it comes to the selection of village headmen, however, care is taken to ensure that they are indeed sons of men who came out with the previous chief, and a village like Katumba which comprised both younger brothers and sons of Mwankuga's generation breaks up, some members 'coming out' with Mwankuga's son, others acting as 'fathers'. Within a village all the members are equal subject to their headman, but a hierarchy of villages is clear.

The pre-eminence of the two senior village headmen of a chief is marked. They alone make fire with him at the 'coming out'. They alone are handed war tails with which to lead their men in battle. Each is responsible for one half of the country and a dispute not settled by the headman of the village of the defendant is reported to the senior headman in whose side of the country the village lies, and he brings it before the chief. Each senior headman has his own village, the two senior villages of the country, in which the royal ladies live; the senior wife married at the 'coming out' is established close to the senior village headman, the second wife close to the second senior headman. A chief may establish wives in a number of villages, and some at least of those he inherits from his father continue to live in his father's old homestead 'to sweep the graves', but his capitals (*ifungalsale*) are the two senior villages of the country in which his two senior wives and two senior village headmen live¹ and the names of the capitals are used not only for the senior villages but for the half sections of the generation they lead. The importance of the two senior headmen is apparent even when their generation has handed over political authority to their sons. At the sacrifices we have described Njohakosa and Ngulyo, heirs of the senior headmen of the chief Mwanyile (80) officiated, and at the 'coming out' of Mwanyile (177) it was Mwambuputa and Kakuja his father's senior headmen who organized the ritual.

Each village established at a 'coming out' is a clearly defined unit with its own land, and leader, and name, but villages are also segments of larger units, the half-section of the chiefdom under a senior headman, and the whole chiefdom under the leadership of

¹ Mwanyile (177), though he had two senior headmen, established his two senior wives in one house, close to the house of Kibale his most senior headman. This was explained as a temporary measure 'because they were young', but it is not the traditional pattern, and may be linked with the fact that the splitting of the country each generation is no longer accepted as the inevitable pattern.

9: Wilson

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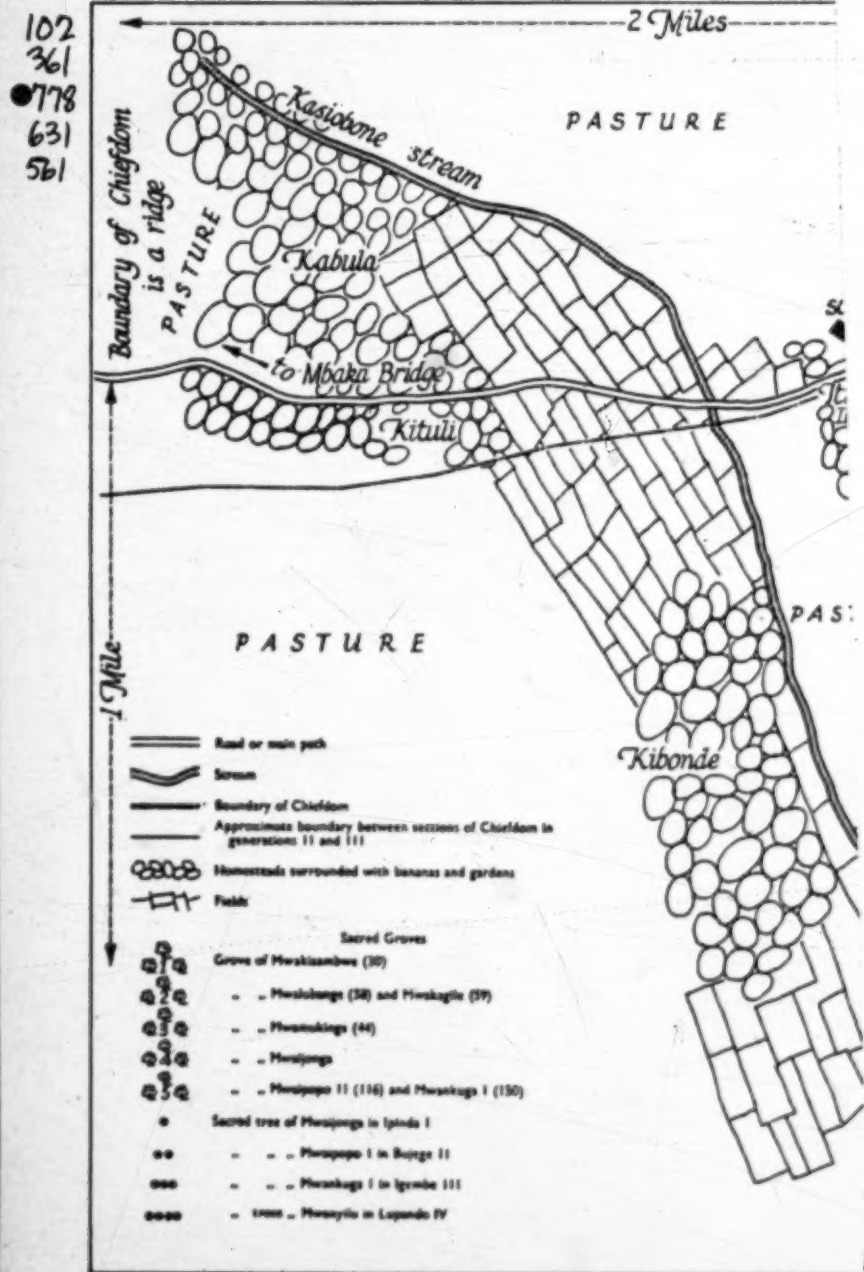
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FN17 Ngonde

Nyakyusa

Chart showing position of sections of plan of Mwaipopo's
Chiefdom. (Facing p. 100)

A	B
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[Facing p. 100; section A]

PLAN OF MWAIPOPO'S CHIFDOM

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959

FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa

102 Miles

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TURE



POPO'S CHIEFDOM (C 24) IN 1955

[Facing p. 100; section B]

- 783 They say that complaining drives away illness, even though the witches
 796 are not seen, and do not confess saying, 'It is we' yet they are ashamed
 [753] thinking 'People have caught me' and they desist.]

MWAMULENGA: Catch anyone you see in your dreams. If someone is ill should we not all gather?

MWAMUNDA: Countrymen, give thanks that there are the chiefs.

And the company assented.

Then there was a discussion about the direction in which the chief should spit and people run. One pointing towards Tukuyu said: 'We always looked that way.' Another said: 'We always reached the boundary.'

- [778] Mwafula (a village headman) came with his young son carrying a calabash of medicated water. Porokoto took a sip and spat out eastward, 'in the direction of the grove of Kabale, to the shades.'

- [755] Mwamulenga shouted: 'Now we have prayed, the sickness is finished, we are present and watch over the homesteads. If we see anyone bringing sickness we will catch him and crush him on the sleeping mat.' There was a roar from the crowd, then all rushed yelling 300 yards or so eastward to the edge of the fields, and back again. Porokoto ran a little way with them, his malacca cane raised, then stopped, looking self-conscious, and strolled homeward. Everyone else scattered, chattering and laughing. On the way back we were greeted: 'You have prayed! Did you catch witches? Whom did you catch?'

Mwasalemba, senior brother of Porokoto and an expert in ritual, added one or two points in explanation:

- [775]
[753] In the old days we threw out the ashes, but we have not yet done so this time; we begin with the ritual on the pasture land and throw out the ashes afterwards. In the old days we threw them out of all the houses and put in fresh fire, new ash, saying 'Thou Kyala, thou shade, receive us, let us sleep here, we throw out the ashes, let sickness be slight.' Those who are angry now are our shades—those of the chiefs—they have gathered with the shades of the commoners. The medicated water means: 'Thou shade, you fathers, may we sleep, use this water for us if we are ill, may we be strong.' The water goes to the shades with these words.

Q.: Why must the women come?

M.: They call the war cry, we run swiftly, the women follow calling the war cry which means, 'You shade, we call the war cry for you that we may be pure—without anger—in our bellies, make us strong also, thou shade, may we also be pure in our bellies, this is your war cry...' The running and calling the war cry is to mock at him, to drive him

CHAPTER VIII

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS'

789 Two activities which are closely linked with sacrifice at the groves of chiefs, but which are distinguished from them because they consist in the manipulation of medicines, rather than prayers and oblations, are 'rain-making' and 'sprinkling the homesteads' to ensure fertility of the soil.

(a) RAIN MAGIC

791 Rain-makers (*abapelafula*) are men who use perforated instruments called 'rain' (*ifula*) to produce rain or sunshine. The heroes were believed to create rain by the virtue in their own bodies, but the Kyungu also had a much prized instrument of iron, perforated like a mouth organ, and several of the chiefs had perforated stones which were used to 'make rain'. In most cases the care of them was delegated to a junior kinsman, a commoner, or (in Ngonde) even a slave, but often the office became hereditary and rain-makers were men of considerable power. Such was Kasitile whose grandfather (44), a younger brother of the chief Mwamukinga (43), had been entrusted with his rain stones. The Kyungu was thought to control the rain in the whole of the Ngonde plain, the Lwembe in an area less clearly defined, but which included Selya, BuKinga, and parts of the Nyakyusa plain, Kyala in the eastern portion of the Nyakyusa plain, and parts of BuKinga and BuKisi. Chiefs were credited with making local rain, in their own countries.

789 791 The technique of 'making' rain was to seal the holes in the perforated instruments with ointment and immerse them in water.

The rain instrument that helped Kyungu was called Mulima. Its holes were its eyes. If they were empty it would be empty in the sky above also, there would be no clouds; if some were full then there would be a few clouds, if all were full then there would be many clouds and rain. If it were raining and he put it in a tree so that its eyes looked up, then the sun would shine. . . . If he opened its eyes that they might be empty and put it in a tree so that it looked up then the clouds dried up above, the sky also became empty.

[p. 114]

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS' 115

The imagination of the Nyakyusa doctor who invented this magic was near enough to that of Shakespeare to be intelligible to an Englishman. The sun is an 'eye'. Clouds may close it. Holes in a rain instrument are also 'eyes' and if these are closed the 'eye of heaven' will also shut—with clouds. 789
778

The Kyungu seems to have kept Mulima (which was only 'the size of a spectacle case') on him, but the ordinary instruments—stones—were left in the chiefs' groves with potsherds in which they were immersed in water when required.

Kyungu Mwakabange had his rain-makers Mugoma and Komanga. Mugoma was a slave, Komanga a man of Ngonde. When the sky was hard he sent a message to them saying: 'Put them into water.' If there were too much rain he said: 'Take them out.' Each had two potsherds with two stones for each. To make rain they rubbed the stones with mutton fat and a medicine called *ilifugo* (fertility) and put them into the sherds and poured water over them.

Godfrey Wilson was taken by Kasitile to see his rain stones in the grove near his house in April 1935. Kasitile addressed his shades:¹

My fathers, do not be angry, *Mwakalebela* (19) (he spat), *Mwanjala* (23), *Mwakisambwe* (30), *Mwakilima* (31), *Mwamapondele* (27), *Mwakihaba* (45), *Mwamukinga* (44), *Mwalubange* (58), *Mwakagile* (59), *Mwandemele* (?), *Mwakanjoki* (60), *Mwaijonga* (82), *Mwafungo* (83), *Mwamwifu* (84), *Mwakabule* (117), *Mwaipopo* (115), these are our friends (repeated urgently), you did not know them, you feared them, but now we do not fear them, they have come and met with us as friends. [782]

There was a large broken pot and three stones, two of them with holes an inch or so in diameter. There used to be five stones—two had been stolen by the Ngoni when they raided this country. When he wishes to make rain, water drawn from a waterfall is brought by Kasitile's wife and left overnight in the grove. Then he pours it into the pot and puts in the stones . . . 'the water bubbles; it is cold, but it seems to boil and the *ifula* go whirling and knocking against the sides of the pot.' . . . The bubbling of the water is compared with rain. Kasitile did not know where his stones had come from. Mwakisambwe his great-grandfather had

¹ The names italicized are those G.W. actually heard in the grove; the whole list was given by Kasitile afterwards as names he had mentioned, but in fact he had not mentioned more than eight.

789 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that
 778 rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of
 land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always
 seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley
 and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for
 making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet
 country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct associa-
 tion of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke
 of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the
 stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and
 going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the
 mother there are eight.'

791 The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry
 [784] season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they
 shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black",
 they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker
 [262] may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the pot-
 sherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'.
 He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains)
 until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which
 means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he
 begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the
 rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.
 [834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my
 wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of
 [643] the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also
 thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile
 was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never
 makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always
 demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his
 rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy
 rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was
 [464] angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the
 [687] roads, the weather grew bad.

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat
 me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and
 beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers
 for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and
 prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from
 hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

RAIN-MAKING AND 'SPRINKLING THE HOMESTEADS' 121

it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. Ambilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the bananas, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kinga returned to Kasitile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamakunda (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the chief's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyangwa ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kasitile's throughout the country. According to Kasitile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamakunda does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipaja (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Misuku.¹

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. the hair and nails of the dead chiefs (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix with the millet seed about to be planted.

Besides this secret and fearsome 'sprinkling' on behalf of chiefdoms, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,² and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the villages of his chiefdom a man, curiously dressed in a cap and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

¹ A district famous for its medicines.

² cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 32-4.

- 793 NDEMBWE
 755 NSOKI
 [551] NSESA
 [791] A SANGU
- } Diviners consulted by Kasitile
- NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

- 793 It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of
 755 delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grand-
 father (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible
 for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga.
 Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the
 plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger
 brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up
 into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed
 to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were
 [787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the home-
 stead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was
 carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests,
 who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry
 and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the
 heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his
 father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the
 [778] *ifungila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifungila*
 implies both the medicines of chieftainship and the power which
 they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

- The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is
 where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine
 for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . .
 [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the
 infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the
 priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga
 priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months
 and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for
 me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called
 the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the
 people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's
 old homestead, and I did so this very year.

- Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with
 [753] his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

KASITILE THE PRIEST

127

younger one¹ gossip with her fellow, she does not go to the witches herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her husband's attentions].

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also in the wrong, to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775] As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to [689] punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his return Kasitile reported:

Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute about the beer. I paid him 12. and drank three preparations of medicine at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially: About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives, but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz. his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead. Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

¹ Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

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769] some live coals into a small calabash and held them against Kasile's chest 'to clear out the blood of coughing'. To pacify the shades a pot of medicines in water was put on the fire; the doctor, Kasile, and his 'senior wife' (actually her younger sister, as Jane was away) each held the pot with a crooked finger. Then Kasile and all his wives and children were sprinkled with the hot medicines. And the doctor told Kasile to sacrifice a bull.

[793] During the following week preparations for the sacrifice went ahead. Kasile walked for some hours through the forest to call Mwamakunda, his fellow priest who always assisted him in the celebrations at Lubaga and 'sprinkling the country'. Mwamakunda is a very old man, contemporary of Kasile's father, and he asked: 'Are you bringing your European to the sacrifice?'

KASILE: Yes.

[186] MWAMAKUNDA: But your father Mwakanjoki (50) did not know any
[688] Europeans, he feared them, he died without ever meeting one. After
[177] your father died, when your elder brother was alive, Europeans came—Germans—and cut down a tree, the small tree in the sacred grove near Kamesu; blood gushed out, it shouted so that it was heard in BuKings.

[762] Kasile explained that the Germans had wanted timber. Afterwards
[783] Mwaipopo (the chief 116) sought a sheep and they tried to put the grove to rights ('close up') by sacrificing it. This was the tree beside which the sacred meat was always put when they sacrificed in the grove. Now one branch has grown up again from the roots.

Mwakunda went on: 'But you did wrong at the beginning not to take the European to pray, and to tell Mwakanjoki (50) that he should not be afraid, the European has made himself our friend.' Kasile, reporting the interview to us said: 'I concealed that we went together to the grove to pray (*vide supra*, p. 115) and Mwamakunda told me: "Let the European take something, let it stay overnight in the house, and go with him, and pray very much. . . . Mwakanjoki has gone off in a huff from your home, you have offended him yourself. Go with the European, take him to your father's home. Now your father has taken offence, he is shaking your body by night because you cut the tree; you have done wrong." ' i.e. two causes for the anger of the shades and Kasile's consequent sickness were given: (i) the cutting of the tree by Mwakanjoki's grave and (ii) Godfrey Wilson's presence at rituals and at Kasile's homestead. So before the sacrifice of expiation for pruning the grove was performed Godfrey Wilson went to be introduced to Kasile's shades for the second time.

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[778] *Round of G.W. 3/6/37*
In the evening as the sun was setting, I went to Kasile's house with a cloth and ox. He put them in the house, took down the calabash which

KASITILE THE PRIEST

133

always hangs under the eaves and is only used for prayer, filled it with water and put into it a stone and a live coal from the fire. Then he took some roots from the roof (previously put there ready) and we went off to the same spot as before (*sic* *apra*, p. 115). Kasitile chewed the root, took water and blew it out, and began to pray:

"Do not be startled, come in your own persons, gather together, with Mwakanjoki (60). You made friends with him before, now he has entered, he has made himself our friend. Indeed I made a mistake, I have come to enter; I cut you on the head, I have done wrong. The sons of Kagile (i.e. 59 + his descendants) complain of me, saying, "It is he who has gone off with the millet, bananas, and maize; and children cry at night behind the huts; we are barren because he has cut Mwakanjoki." I have sought this cow which you wanted. Mwakanjoki (60), Lwembe (57), Mwakalebela (19), Mwatomboka (29), Mwahabanga (58), Mwakagile (55), Mwakijonga (82), Kyala (2), we have come to attend to you (pointing to the grave). Kikungubela, Nyanyigwa Kyamba Kitall,¹ Lyambilo (12) come to your home if you are at Mwahabanga's (58), come if you are at Mwalitende's (81), come Mwakanjoki (60) and the Kings and Lwembe (5); Mwakalebela (19) come, give me cattle and millet, and the powerful medicine which you had. Since you are brooding over me go out from my body, go out! I pay my debt. We have come to take you to your home since you have gone off in a huff, come! I will never cut your branches again. I fear you and I will respect the branches. Come to your house, that of Mwamaleba (85), of Kanjoki (mother of 60), come. And he (G.W.) is innocent (*made*), do not fear him. He is the owner of the ritual, he is Mwamaleba (85), he is my senior, I am the junior. Sometimes I wish to embrace him, sometimes I fear that he is going to imprison me.² May the bananas increase! I am left alone! It is I who am here! Move out of my body! And give us medicine! May the offering increase overnight, may the cattle increase and the maize, and in the morning let me tell Mwalipaja (G.W.) that the bananas and medicine have increased. If there is anything else you are a liar, if this chill begins again then I have gone, I am not here. Amen! (*sic*)."

Very early the following morning the sacrificial bull was killed. Kasitile had arranged that our Mohammedan cook should come to cut its throat.³ Then, later in the morning, the crucial drinking and 'speaking out' began. Kasitile had provided two pots of beer.

¹ These Kings priests whose names are titles of office.

² In the earlier years of our acquaintance Kasitile had denied both the possibility of an illing chief and human sacrifice for the dead. It is possible that he had converted to either one or both of these ritual acts. He himself reported that the Banga doctor had told him: 'You have a European as a close friend. . . . You enjoy his company much, but there is something left . . .' (i.e. the friendship is not yet complete).

³ Occasionally so that he could partake of the meat, but the reason given seemed inadequate.

KASITILE THE PRIEST

135

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjiki (he) gone off in a huff? Why?') [13] There was a continuous effort to extract reasons. [782]

The meat from the top of the furing (jinsapa) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed. [178]

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the eating stump of an old acacia tree, from which a lacy growth had sprung. one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjiki (he), together with Lwembe (37), Mwakalehele (13), and the Kings, come, with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) [149] 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the even calves, stand by us Mwakanjiki (he), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (37), Mwakalehele (13), Nyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, Njakahe (13), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjiki, let us sleep well. This is Mwamakunda (i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father). I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwakupa (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this shall go from my body! We have finished! Amwa?' [149]

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwakupa.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would work with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'. [134]

Then we rejoined Mwanipapa and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwanipapa said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lohaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" (i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return). Njakahe answered this saying that no offence was meant. [137]

Then Njakahe turned to Mwanipapa (1:14) and raised the question [149] of his son, Mwanika (132) who had seduced Mwanipapa's wife, Mpora.

* The boundary Kings priest.

[793]

KASITILE THE PRIEST

127

to which all had led up.) Then Mwasipapa (114) spoke: 'We have taken home Mwasakajiki (56), we have taken home Mwasikimulwa (51). And the others agreed: 'We have taken him, we have taken him.' Mwasipapa went on to speak of the tree cuttings: 'It was always a swept place, Mwasakajiki (56) built there, let it be a swept place again, let it be clear, let our prayers go beneath to enter the house here [i.e. no matter that the trees have been pruned], prayers go beneath in the swept place. See, we buried our father Mwasipapa (54) in the swept place, was it heavy? [i.e. a sacred grove] No, a tree grows later. So if I like I cut that it may be clear again.' To which Kasitile replied: 'Thank you, Mwasakajiki' (114, identified with his grandfather 56). Mwasipapa continued: 'Let no one whisper. Who whispered? Where do we all look? Here! It is our earth, here, it is our tree, here, it is our fertility of the soil (ndani), here. No one stirred up Mwasikimulwa (51); he stirred up himself.'

So they prepared to go, saying, 'It's getting dark, it's getting dark.' But Kasitile stopped them. 'Wait, there is one thing left, tell Mwasakajiki (114, identified with his grandfather 56) that he should seek a cow, let us finish.' They took this up: 'Yes, since we have taken your grandfather to his home, let us go to your father, Mwasipapa (54), and to Mwasakajiki (114), let us finish them.'

Mwasipapa ignored this. 'It's getting dark, let us go.' And Kasitile rebuked it by addressing Nyakuswa and his fellows: 'But Nyakuswa have you cattle?' 'Yes.'

'And has Klamgwa got some?'

'Yes.'

'Well, then, is it you who will seek this cow?'

'No.'

'Indeed, it hurts Mwasakajiki' (114, identified with his grandfather 56) [i.e. it hurts him to have to spend his cows].

'Do not "cut leaves at home" [i.e. summon a crowd and discuss the matter publicly], he will be startled, he will swear at us, speak with him privately.'

So they went off. Jane (wife of Kasitile, 86) took the breast of beef to Mwasipapa's (114) place. One leg went to the priest, Nyakuswa, Ngilya, and Klamgwa, one to Mwasakajiki and Nifino (Kasitile's kinsman), and another kinsman who was not present, the bump and neck were sent to us; and two legs and the chine were kept for Kasitile himself and his female relations.

A couple of weeks later, when Kasitile came to visit, he explained one or two points in the ritual. Asked about Mwasakajiki's formal words 'Why do you shut up words in the house?' and the reply of Klamgwa and Nyakuswa, he said: 'That is very important. Mwasakajiki is my man, he stands by me, he eats meat with me, he compelled

KASITILE THE PRIEST

141

(their witchcraft); to each other they say: 'It is your father.' Because if they ascribe to a fellow commoner saying, 'It is we', he says, 'You are "eating" me, drink the ordeal'. The witch is driven out. But to us they admit saying, 'It was we who were angry.' They do not fear us. Commoners are the workers in the country; they arrived first.

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It will be remembered that the commoners are spoken of as 'black people' (*abantu*) and that the first chiefs were 'pale' (*amale*) but these words also have moral implications. 'It is said that a person "has a black heart" or "has black blood", or "is black in his face towards us" when he is thought to be a witch, eating his fellows, or when he is a thief, or a liar, or an adulterer, or dirty. Even though his body is light coloured (*amale*) the word "black" (*ntu*) is used of him metaphorically.' And *amale* implies innocent, pure, as well as light in colour. The comparable symbolism of 'nigger' and 'white man' is all too familiar in Johannesburg or Charleston.

That Kasitile himself was much afraid of the commoner chiefs and was relieved by the 'speaking out' was clear, and the people of the country as a whole were glad that the ritual had been celebrated, for they expected an increase in fertility. Some days later Mwakya (148), came in and said, laughing, but half serious: 'Congratulations, Mwakya (G.W.). You have celebrated the ritual, we rejoice greatly, you give us fertility of the soil, you are a great priest.'

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183

In some moods Kasitile was inclined to become a Christian, but he felt an obligation to the country as priest, and believed too strongly in the efficacy of the traditional rituals to abandon them. He said to G.W. one day, over a pot of beer: 'If it were not for the ritual I would get you to speak to the Europeans of the mission, and I would go with my wife Jane, and be baptized. If my son was old enough and had agreed to carry on the ritual I would do it; perhaps I will when I am old. . . . It is good to have one's heart washed clean, we are dirty inside. The Christians say to us: "You with your four wives each, you are all dirty, you love one and squabble with the rest." Well, it is so with me, I love Jane only; I would like to go and be baptized with her. But I fear for the ritual, I fear hunger, the hunger of the people. For I am the food of the country, I am the maker of food.'

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We left Selya shortly after this and were not able to observe the effect of the ritual on political relationships in Selya. Kasitile lived another seventeen years, duly performing his functions, and in 1954 he was succeeded by his brother's son, James.

787 A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself
 [278] selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *musuf*
 ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *musuf* poison was
 formerly administered by a doctor,¹ before witnesses, and the
 innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the
 guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some
 even dying. Nowadays *musuf* is administered only in the greatest
 secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which
 turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The
 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 138).
 The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *musuf*'. Another
 method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board.
 Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no'
 the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a
 stick of *musika* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on
 the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells,
 horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case
 virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to
 the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An
 ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instru-
 ments, and porridge without '*musuf*' is useless.

751 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance,
 754 are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty.
 789 These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjeki (who came of a
 family of doctors) told us:

● [778] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment,
 as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for
 burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet,
 and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say
 the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the
 doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and
 treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds
 is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for
 fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass
 give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet
 nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children
 and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medi-
 cine (*shipaga*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a
 protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all
 these things.

¹ For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Chief Gungu*, pp. 119-12, 243-4.

CHAPTER XI

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

772 We can now piece together, from myth and ritual, the traditional Nyakyusa view of their universe. They have no elaborated system of ideas and the synthesis which follows is more systematic than any uneducated Nyakyusa would formulate.

773 The origin of men was a 'dark house', located high on the Livingstone plateau, and from here the Nyakyusa themselves, and people familiar to them, are thought to have sprung, but there is a hint of the first of the heroes having come 'from the north', and there is also the contradictory notion that the heroes were creators.

[774] It was Kyala who made us in the beginning with iron ore'; 'Kyala is the smith who forges us'; 'Mhau is the smith who forges us'; 'Lwembe made Mumbe out of clay to be the father of commoners'. But all are agreed that Lwembe (or Mhau) was the ancestor of the chiefs and no clear distinction is made between creator and progenitor.

Crops and animals and fire were distributed by the heroes. Of their first creation or invention there is no tale for, though Lwembe created animals, he was already a herd-boy when he did so. Moreover, the 'owners of the soil' in the Nyakyusa valley had some crops before Lwembe came bringing them others, together with cattle and fire; but which were the indigenous crops of the valley and which the new is not discussed. If contradictions between the various myths are pointed out they are explained, like divergences in ritual, in terms of differing origin: 'It is the Lumbwa people to the west who say that cattle came out of an ant-hill, and the Nyakyusa proper who say they were brought by Lwembe', and so on. Differentiation is emphasized and accounted for by the separation of languages.

• [775] The heroes had a creative force in their own persons, which is inherited by their descendants, the divine kings, and, in a lesser degree, the chiefs; as in Egypt 'the King's potency is felt in the very body and person of each of his subjects'.¹ That potency is partly innate in the royal line, but it is amplified by the use of medicines of which the greatest are reserved to rulers. Vigour is

¹ H. Frazer, *King of the Gods*, p. 60.

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

133

thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. 773 (776)

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the reciprocity between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who are their food, raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. (52)

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kaduha, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; and with most their pythons 'be quiet'. 778 85

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grave of Lubaga, and the source of the *ijigide* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstonia escarpment and Rangwe mountains are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. (15)

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

157

The shade is the principle of life represented by seed, or the root of a banana, or a tree growing by a grave;¹ the hero embodied a vital force which caused grain to sprout and clay cattle to breathe. The line between a hero, the shade of one of his successors, and the shade of a chief is a very faint one. They all have power over people other than their descendants and are approached by hereditary priests. As some elderly men of Ngonde put it: 'The nobles, not the living Kyungu, go to the groves of the Kyungus to pray; they go because the Kyungus who have died are shades to us all (*he kagula keta tume*).'

The heroes had miraculous power but it differed in degree, rather than in kind, from that possessed by their descendants. Like that of the divine kings and chiefs it lay both in their own bodies and in medicines, especially the *fagila* which is still used by chiefs.

Kyala and Luembe dwell 'beneath' (*pan*) with the shades, as opposed to 'above' (*lamuwa*), which implied traditionally 'on earth' not 'in the sky'. There is no hint of a sky god in the traditional system, and the distinction between black and white offerings, which the early missionaries took to be a distinction between offerings to the shades and to a sky god,² was unequivocally interpreted by the priests in another fashion. The white (*musale*) offering to Kyala or Ngulube is a symbol not of purity, but of an unclouded sky, and the nomenclature quality of the heroes is conceived of as contamination, not holiness. Like the shades, the heroes must be 'driven off' lest men go mad, and it is when they have driven them away that men are *tshe*—white, innocent, free of anger. Men should be *tshe* but this is never cited as an attribute of the pagan Kyala. It is the terrible, not the goodness or purity of God of which the Nyakyusa are aware. This is underlined by the fact that a madman when, 'when he comes home rushes off', and 'does not see that his fellows are human beings,' and who 'has a loose heart' (i.e. is passionate and quarrelsome), or 'whose heart curls up like a leaf in the sun, or turns upside down', is called 'Mhwa' or is said to have been 'caught hold of by Kyala'.

Kyala is one hero among others but, as has been shown, the name is also used in the sense of 'the lord'. Kyala as 'the lord' of a community or junior kinship is distinct from Kyala the hero with his own place in a genealogy and his own shrine. The difference

¹ Maxine Wilson, *Shade of Kings*, pp. 109-11, 111-12, 113-14.

² F. F. F. F., *The Nyakyusa of Nyasaland*, pp. 10-11.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

175

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the pro-creative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.¹ [797]
[795]
[834]
[262]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic. [796]

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that because the Reverend — Kleus summoned the trackers and school children to a feast in the grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing [777]
[778] ●

¹ For an account of such a meeting, cf. Mission Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.

x 797 there?" And after he went there was much food.' In fact, it
 x 795 appears that he took the teachers and schoolchildren to the grove
 • [778] that they might no longer be afraid of it: the girls gathered fire-
 wood there, and everyone entered and made a noise, thus breaking
 great taboos. But all this happened long ago (the visit to Mbyanga
 was in 1913 or 1914) and, as was indicated earlier, the common
 view among Christians is that pagan rituals *used* to be necessary
 and efficacious, but are so no longer. We were assured by Christ-
 [845] ians who themselves took no part in twin rituals that 'formerly
 [753] people fell ill if they did not celebrate'. 'Yes, of course, they were
 very sick indeed in the old days, the whole body would swell.'
 Some even maintained that it was still necessary for pagans to
 celebrate though not for Christians. A Christian chief explained:

[778] The sacred grove of Mwakihaba is just here in my country; . . . in
 [789] the old days they used to take a little fresh milk and an unripe stem of
 bananas, and put them in the grove. . . . The next day the calabash
 was full of milk and the stem was ripe. This was really so in the old
 days, Kyala heard men and agreed to their requests in this way. We
 went to ask for rain and food in the groves; the chief would kill a cow
 and Kyala agreed, food and rain came. Now that the Gospel has
 spread, since the Europeans have opened the Gospel to us Kyala
 refuses to agree, he says: 'Since they are proud and refuse to hear the
 Gospel I will discipline them', and he refuses to agree to the old ways.
 QUESTION: What about witchcraft?

Perhaps there were people who were witches in the old days; at any
 [754] rate I know that when milk ran short and a man was accused to the
 chief of bewitching the cattle, the chief used to take his cattle and drive
 him out of the country, and then milk was plentiful again. Of that I
 am sure.

QUESTION: And now?

No, it is not like that now.

[688] Many pagans attribute the decline in fertility which is taking
 place, and the decrease in the yield of milk, to the decay of the
 old communal rituals and the unhampered activities of witches.

Nevertheless, as the number of Christians in an area increases,
 the pagans tend to curtail their rituals more and more. The
 direct parallel between pagan confession, sacrifice, and com-
 munion with the shades, and the Holy Communion of the
 Christian Church is recognised by many, and one is felt to replace
 the other. Regarding the rituals of kinship we were repeatedly
 told: 'We see that the Christians, who say the only rituals are the

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

185

were connected. And if the expected judgement does not fall when a son has wronged his father it is said: 'The father loves the child so much that he only complains half-heartedly.'

It is admitted (when the point is pressed) that misfortunes may fall on good men as well as evil, and then they are interpreted as a discipline, a testing, from God, but this is 'a hard saying', scarcely to be believed. The *inequalities* in the fortunes of men demand explanations and Christians, as well as pagans, find it very difficult to believe that they are 'natural'. They always suspect some human intervention; they believe that men manipulate mystical power to buy fortune for themselves. The reality of pythons in the belly may be doubted by the better educated, but belief in 'medicines' has scarcely diminished, and new medicines are constantly coming in from outside, among them costly patent medicines guaranteed to cure any and every disease, or to make the user popular and successful. Some sort of distinction between medicines which it is permissible for a Christian to use and those, like love-potions and defence against witchcraft, which are not permissible, is attempted, but the line is an arbitrary one. And often there is a conflict in the individual's own mind: as one elderly woman of a chief's family (who would normally have taken the first-fruits medicines) put it: 'It's taboo to use these medicines; even if we do fall ill we say: "No, I will not take it, I look towards God (pointing upwards)."'

Most Christians have pagan kinsfolk who are quick to interpret misfortunes in pagan terms, and the sort of conflict of ideas that arises is illustrated in the case of a young woman who died in childbirth. She and her father were Moravians; her husband had joined the Pentecostal Church which rejects all Nyakyusa medicines. Her first child was still-born, the second died shortly after its birth, and her father insisted that she should have been taking a medicine which it was customary for women in his lineage (he was a Penja) to drink during pregnancy; the girl herself wished to be treated, for she did not accept the teaching of the Pentecostal Church on this point, but her husband refused. During her third pregnancy she was ill and finally, with her husband's consent, she was carried to a Nyakyusa doctor of her father's choosing; nevertheless she died. Her father and her husband had been on bad terms, the father demanding, rather arbitrarily, the balance of the marriage cattle; and there was a great deal of gossip, some neighbours hinting that her own father had killed

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

189

one of the early missionaries the sons of leading men had been sent to Kondowe to be educated and their influence had been important in gaining the support of the Kyungu and chiefs for the mission. 797^x
795^x

In the second generation of Christians not nearly all those baptized in infancy come to be confirmed or 'blessed'—an elder in Ngonde put it at about half. There is, therefore, a large group of people who have been Church members and have been struck off the Church register because they have married a second wife or committed adultery or become drunkards, and show no sign of repentance, and of those who have grown up as Christians, but have not maintained any connexion with a Church in later life. (688)

So far we have talked of Christian rituals and dogma in terms of the three mission Churches whose converts form the great bulk of Christians: differences between them are negligible. The doctrinal differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic do not bulk large to the Nyakyusa, and since the Roman Catholic Church had not been operating for any long period among them and had a membership of under 1,000, many of whom were Ngoni from Songea or Kisi, who had settled in Tukuyu district, it was not possible to make any adequate comparison of the differences between Protestant and Catholic groups.

Two small Churches, the Pentecostal Holiness and the Watch Tower, had certain peculiarities. The Pentecostal Holiness Church holds highly emotional services at which members are expected to 'speak with tongues'; during prayers the whole congregation begins to jabber, each man usually being unintelligible to his neighbour, though words of other languages can be distinguished. Our informants maintained that the attraction of the Church was that its members seemed to 'have more of the Holy Ghost', as demonstrated by the 'speaking with tongues', though the more cynical of outsiders mentioned also 'the leaves and fishes'—cheaper Bibles, and the fact that the European leader was the largest employer of labour in the district and those who belonged to his Church got on best with him. Many of the members had formerly been Moravians. Its rules were strict: members were not permitted to smoke or drink, or use any Nyakyusa medicines. (781)
(776) •
(466)
(715)

The Watch Tower members emphasised that their Church, through its leader, Judge Rutherford, interpreted prophecy in a way in which no other Church could do. They practised baptism (852)

conscious. This disintegration of a former coherence, and a decreasing awareness of the meaning of symbols used, are perhaps characteristic of changing societies in Africa.

Despite the growth of the Christian Church, the great demand for schools, and the dropping of the old rituals directed to family shades and the heroes, belief in the power of medicines flourishes. Probably most deaths and misfortunes are still attributed to an enemy using either witchcraft or sorcery. The traditional belief in witchcraft is rejected by educated people, but belief in the power of medicines is general. Autopsies still take place and occasionally the poison ordeal is administered in secrecy; one case was mentioned which occurred in 1942. As we have seen, medicines have always been regarded as a potential instrument of individual competition. They are used in the rituals of kinship to ensure health, fertility, and good manners and morals; in the ritual of chieftainship to buttress authority, and in 'sprinkling the homesteads' to fertilize the fields; but also by individuals to steal the fertility of their neighbours' fields and to grow rich at the expense of their neighbours, and it is their use as an instrument of individual aggrandisement that is most talked of today. There were many reports of their use by rivals to office as chiefs, and the floods of 1955, which washed away the Mbaka bridge and caused a serious landslide on that river, were interpreted as incidents in a prolonged fight between chiefs who were rivals for the position of paramount. The deaths of the heir of one of them in 1953, and of the other chief himself in 1956, were also attributed to their duel with medicines.

Along with the political changes there has been a development of the Churches, more particularly of the Moravian Church, which is now largely self-supporting, with growing congregations served by African ministers.¹ Until 1958 the two main Protestant missions in Nyakyusa valley, the Moravian and Lutheran, were staffed by Germans and their funds came mainly from Germany. The war meant the withdrawal of the missionaries and the cutting off of funds. After a lapse of three years one Moravian missionary, and later one Lutheran, came to take charge of the missions and they were reinforced by other missionaries after the end of the war, but the whole policy in both missions is to build up self-supporting churches staffed by African pastors.

The work of the White Fathers mission was not interrupted by

¹ Change in Nyanda is not discussed.

13:Lehnann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Some Field Notes on the Nyakyusa

61

ancestors aid of Kyara¹⁷. At the same time he moved his curved wood to and fro in the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner¹⁸. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors¹⁹. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness his act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwalinyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

¹⁷ name of the supreme spiritual being.

¹⁸ Cf. MacKenzie, p. 128.

¹⁹ MacKenzie refers that such a place is named "ikirinja", "the family place of prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karanga.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Some Field Notes on the Nyakusa

65

After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut. 881 867 285

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended. 881 578

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (*ikibaga*). A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (*ubuleli*, pl. *imi-leli*) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor²². These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple. 622 352 [342]

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big (*ifiraba* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (*urukope*, ag.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana leaf. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *abwutigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glance the present *amafuma* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that 342 353 622 [251] [237] [778] [25]

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

66

F. Rudolf Lehmann

342

353

622

778

[775]

[824]

he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*ubusyuka*)²⁸ themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unwigara*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)²⁹ were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*³⁰ was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *mwafi*"³¹, the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "Umne wana Kyara!" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

[789]

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)³², e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *ubusiyu* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

[593]

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *isyenga*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass³³.

241

784

9. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

²⁸ Cf. Wilson, *Burial*, p. 8: *unyuks* (Sling); Mackenzie, p. 181: *banyuka* (Karinga).

²⁹ Cf. Mackenzie, p. 275: *ifingira* (Karinga).

[278]

³⁰ The pharmacological substance of the bark (*Cortex Erythrophlei*, "Sees-bark") is the alkaloid *Erythrophlein* which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the *Digitalis*-group (cf. C. G. Sauterson: *Pflanzstudien* XII. *Arkiv för Botanik* 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1933, p. 4).

³¹ Cf. Wilson, *Land Rights*, p. 32; Mervaisky, p. 134; Filleborn, p. 360.

³² *amaka* is not a specific expression for "magical" or "religious" "supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. *ukhi* *ukhi* *aguma* *amaka*, in this word is power. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *maka*, examined in my treatise "Maka. The term of that what is exceedingly striking". *Siamesische Forschungsmitteilung für Völkerkunde*, I. Reihe. Ethnographie, Vol. 1, Leipzig, 1923. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with *Kyara*, or he names it directly "Kyara" (cf. Mervaisky, p. 118 (187, 218)).

³³ Cf. Filleborn, p. 377, fig. 149: Schematic drawing of a round-hut (as also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).